# Adirondack Writing and the Wilderness Aesthetic

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## MAIN PAGE

### 1.- Introduction

*A view of the Raquette Lake landscape in the Adirondacks.*

On May 15, 1885, the New York legislature created the Adirondack Forest Preserve for the protection of a territory comprised of about 681,000 acres. Seven years later, the Adirondack Park was created, and in 1894, New Yorkers voted to approve the New York Constitution, where Article VII, Section 7, declared that "the lands of the State, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands." Known by Adirondackers and nature lovers as the "forever wild clause," the amendment encloses in just a few phrases the uniqueness and the ideological parameters of the Adirondack space.

On the basis of what constitutes wilderness and what man's role in it is, Adirondack voices have sometimes come together, sometimes differed, sometimes even openly argued in the press, and often times maintained a unique stance. Some writers have argued that since the definition of terms such as "wilderness" have historically proven to remain far from static, discourses pertaining to the idea of wilderness have invariably fluctuated according to historical context and social circumstances. As Philip Terrie has argued,

> Given the infinitely great number of definitions of what constitutes anything so vague as "human needs" and given the complex cultural heritage brought by Americans to their contact with the Adirondacks, we should not be surprised to discover that the development of an environmental attitude in and toward the region has been marked –as it has nearly everywhere– by ambiguity and confusion. (1985: 7)

In a similar line, Paul Schneider has claimed that

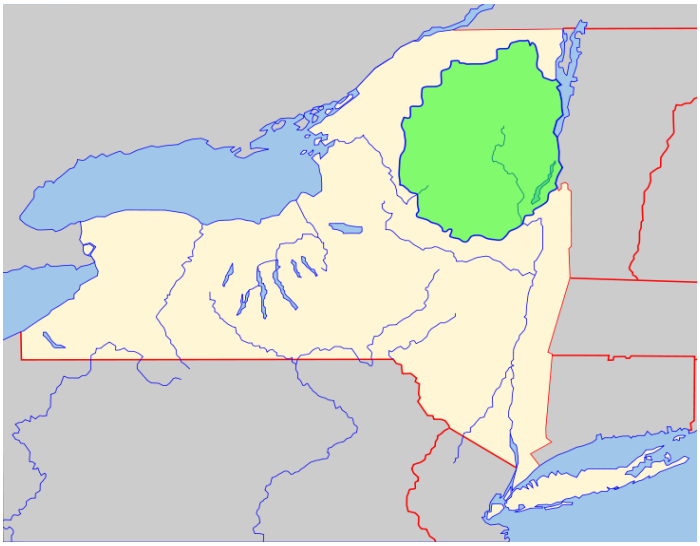
> Depending on who you ask, the Park today is either an important, albeit still seriously flawed land, model of peaceful coexistence between civilization and the wild, or a dysfunctional pipe dream. The proper meanings and uses of "wilderness" are not yet settled. (xii)

Paradoxically, it is this ambiguity and the multiple values that have been associated to the notion of wilderness which have created what we understand the Park represents. The object of this study is to pinpoint down the main features of Adirondack writing, particularly during the nineteenth century, and how they relate to the wider American historical context. A sub-tradition of literature in itself, the writers of the "forever wild" land have constructed the very territory they treat as subject through their stories and narratives. Yet one should not forget that Adirondack literature is a metonymical extension of what was happening in the western world; that is, preoccupations represented in the region's writing mirror the social and cultural transitions that America was to go through since its independence.

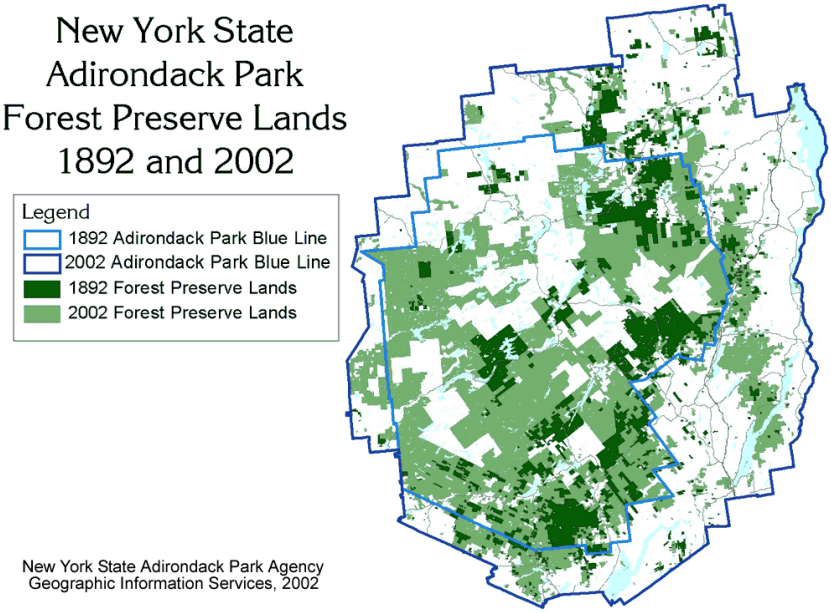
## 2.- The Park

Located in upstate New York, the Adirondack Park is larger than the state of Massachusetts, and bigger than Yellowstone, Yosemite, Glacier Park or the Grand Canyon. Having grown from its 3.1 million acres marked in 1894 by the imaginary blue line, today about six million acres located west of Lake Champlain, northwest of the Taconic Mountains and north of the Mohawk Valley comprise the territory. The Park is made up of public and privately-owned lands. The result is a puzzle on the map: the blue line, which has expanded its perimeter to almost double its original size in 1894,

delineates today about 2.8 million acres of forest preserve land (out of which 1.1 million acres constitute wilderness areas) and 3.1 million acres of privately-owned land.



*Adirondack Park blue line in the State of New York. Courtesy of Wikipedia - Jackaranga, blue line added by Daniel Case, derived from Image: New York blank.svg and Image:New York Adirondack.svg. Reproduced under GNU Free Documentation License; http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:GNU_Free_Documentation_License*

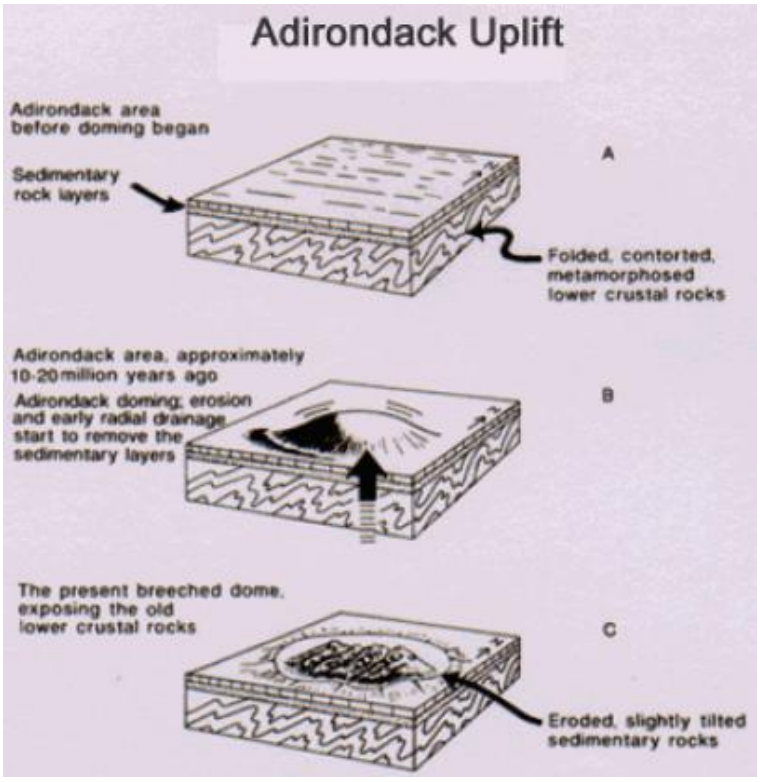



*Courtesy of the Adirondack Park NY State Agency.*

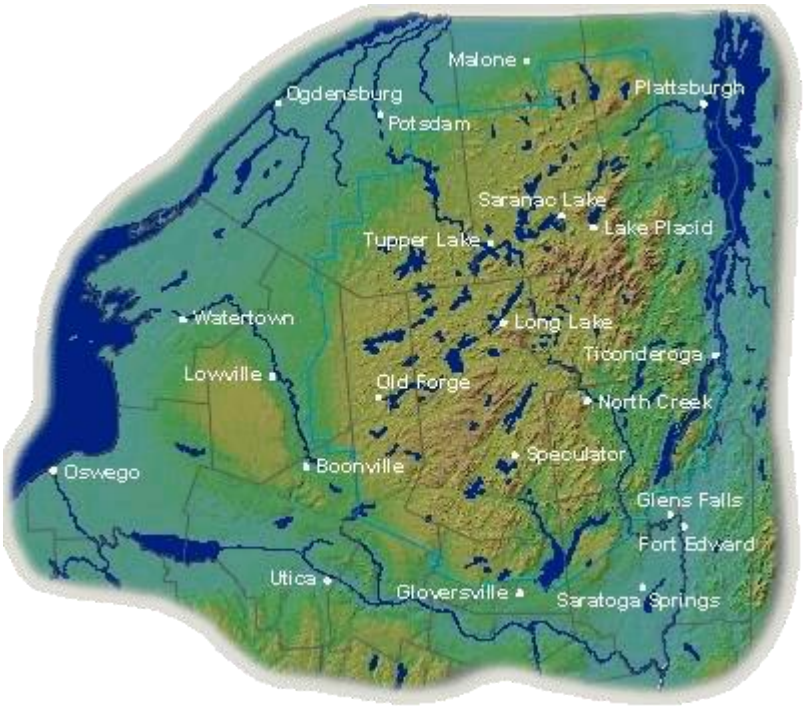
Geologically speaking, the Adirondack region is part of a group of igneous and metamorphic rocks, known as the Grenville Province, believed to be around a billion

years of age and crossing from Labrador to Mexico. Originally the Adirondacks were a flat surface, just like the lands surrounding it now, but around twenty million years ago (this being an estimated date and a recent geological development) the Adirondacks were uplifted, forming a dome. The apparent reason for this phenomenon seems to be the existence of an underlying hot spot, which caused the rise of the sediments. However likely, this remains a speculation, for "hot spots where the magma beneath the crust is rising can create domes, but such domes usually have hot springs or geysers, or at least a telltale excess of warmth in deep mines or wells. The Adirondacks have none of these" (Jenkins, 9). The result is an area of high, yet shallow valleys and mountains rising between two and three millimeters per year. These geological characteristics determined the welfare of farming in the Adirondacks: as we will see throughout this case study, the success of farming was limited only to a few areas, particularly around lake deposits, while in higher sections the quality of the soil made cultivation practically impossible, leaving abandonment as the only viable solution for settlers:

> The ideal soil from an agricultural perspective is a deep, well-drained loam with some limestone or marble influence and without an excessive volume of rock fragments. Soils of this type are not very common in the central Adirondacks . . . When these soils are encountered in the central Adirondacks, they are generally found in the valley bottoms. In those instances when the early settlers attempted to grow crops on the less-productive sites, the results were usually poor. The land was ultimately abandoned, and it reverted back to forest. (Briggs, 50)




*The formation of the Adirondacks dome. Courtesy of the NYS Geological Survey, "The Geology of New York: A Simplified Account," Chapter 4. See Links to Online Sources and Acknowledgements.*




*Map of upstate New York (Courtesy of Adirondackwood.com, the Directory of New York's Adirondack-based wood product manufacturing companies and the wood products they produce. See Links to Online Sources).*

The Park includes about two thousand mountain peaks by eastern standards, forty of which are higher than four thousand feet. About thirty thousand miles of rivers and brooks drift through the land, which also counts with more than four thousand additional bodies of water (lakes, bogs, ponds, and swamps). Wildlife includes countless species of birds, including water birds, boreal birds and birds of prey, and mammals –from beavers, minks, otters and muskrats to bobcats, deer, coyotes, and black bears, just to name a few. Local fish include between seventy and eighty fresh water species. Trees and plant species overwhelm the landscape. Depending on the type of forest, different types of softwoods and hardwoods take over the space. Main trees species, for example, include beech tree, yellow birch, white birch, sugar maple, red maple, red spruce, white spruce, white pine, red pine, red oaks, white oaks, hemlock, and balsam fir.

The variety of wildlife and plants attest to one fact: the Adirondacks hold dramatic landscape changes due to the different sub-environments manifested. At the top of the highest peaks, Mount Marcy and Algonquin Mountain, both of which stand above five thousand feet, the landscape is one of alpine tundra, while the bottomlands around the Champlain Basin procure the best possible land for farming in the Park, at an elevation of no higher than 500 feet. Most mountainous are the eastern and the southern areas, the northwest part of the Park being of a more levelled surface. Whether in the form of wetlands or rocky, angled facades, mountains or valleys, the plate of granitic rocks over which the Adirondacks rise displays an all-pervasive landscape which is living proof of a history of attempts to balance the natural world and human activity.

*Views of Adirondack wetlands and distant mountains from the Heron Marsh Trail at the Paul Smiths Interpretative Center.*

It has been mentioned above that the Adirondacks are composed of both private and state lands. By 1868, the State of New York had begun acquiring and confiscating pieces of the region's land as profits for unpaid taxes. Since the creation of the Park in 1892, the state-owned lands inside the blue line have impressively increased. Today the public lands constitute 2.8 million acres, the equivalent of what the entire Adirondack Park (including both private and public lands) had measured when it was created in 1892.

Today home to around 130,000 year-round residents, the Park contains a total of sixty-two towns. Yearly, the region is crossed by an average of ten million visitors, with summer marking the climactic point of the tourist season. While some tourists seek busy schedules of thrilling adventure sports–rock-climbing, hiking, fishing, skiing, camping, white-water rafting, and canoeing–others come to the Adirondacks in search of peace and quiet, a contemplative and intimate time away from hectic city life. Thus the last decades have shown a dramatic increase of second-home building by former visitors who have decided to become part-time residents. This coexistence of private and public spheres enables the appearance of markets, businesses, hotels and motels, homes of all styles and sizes, more than 5,000 miles of paved road, at least sixteen major dams, recreational centers, sports centers, golf courses, and educational centers inside the same blue line that also encircles wilderness areas and forest preserve areas free from the threat of the timber industry and the construction business (any legal activity considered as an act of "trammelling" on the part of an individual or a corporation requires a constitutional amendment of the "forever wild" clause).

Not surprisingly, until the creation of the very controversial Adirondack Park Agency (APA) in 1971, there was no regulation for the management of private lands. Until 1971, private land owners had been free to do as they pleased with their property. While the "forever wild" clause and the Conservation Department protected the integrity of the Forest Preserve, private lands were often submitted to the abuse of eastern mining companies and the timber industry, which reached its peak in the late nineteenth century.

Other activities such as hunting and trapping had had devastating effects on the Adirondack wildlife. Even before the State of New York had started acquiring and confiscating the first pieces of land that would go on to become part of the Forest Preserve, the cougar, the lynx, the beaver and the wolf and been practically extirpated from the region, and the bobcat, otter, deer and black bear population had greatly diminished. Land management and regulations were able to fix some of the damage once the "forever wild" clause was established. Reintroduced in the early 1900s, the beaver made a fruitful recovery. The bald eagle and the peregrine falcon were also reintroduced in the second half of the twentieth century, though far from the beaver's successful results, and in recent years there have been reports of cougar sightings. Still, the reintroduction of other wildlife species, mainly the wolf, remains a controversy under discussion.

The point here is that the Adirondack terrain has simultaneously been one of competing and collaborating forces. Conservationist shifts in policies benefited the wilderness but limited the lifestyle of year-round residents, who were often left without a say and came second to the demands brought on by the tourist season. Until the 1800s, the Adirondacks had been virtually ignored by Americans and the region had often been manifested in maps by a void space between Lake Champlain and Lake Ontario. Yet since the nineteenth century it has been defined as a territory where man has competed and tried to make amends with nature, where modern thought and technology have shown their profound effects, and most importantly, where signs of an interest towards a balance between the human and the natural have increasingly manifested.

These considerations explain the reasons for the many attached values to the Adirondacks and its wilderness. Throughout its relatively short history, it has come to

mean different things for different people. For the wealthy outsiders, it once represented a place of leisure where mental and physical masculine features could be displayed. For the nineteenth-century forester and geologist, it represented a place of future prosperity, a land that could be managed through conservationist practices. For the romanticist spirit, it was a place to encounter nature's exhibition of the sublime and the beautiful. For the miner and the logger, it has been a fountain of resources from which to make a profit, or in the very least, a living. To the scientist it may be a wide research field, yet to the nineteenth-century farmer it was the barren land that inevitably led him to poverty. To the optimistic environmentalist, it is a model of civilization adapting and adopting the laws and needs of nature. To the pessimistic environmentalist it a place where despite efforts for its sustainability, it continues to deteriorate due to pollution produced even outside the boundaries of the State of New York. In other words, the Adirondacks have been defined by what it is, what it is useful for, and what it can provide, whether the resulting profits are of an aesthetic, an idealistic, or of a more tangible nature.

## 3.- A Brief Overview of the History of the Adirondacks

### 3.1.- The Beaver Wars and the French and Indian War

Before the Adirondacks were even deemed as a region to settle or in which to even conduct a geographical report, the land had been the stage for the so-called "beaver wars" of the fur trade transactions and the for the bloodshed of the French and Indian Wars.

Jacques Cartier is generally credited as the first European to glance upon the Adirondacks when in 1535, sailing up the St. Lawrence River, he is said to have looked southward from the region where Montreal now stands. More than seventy years later, in 1609, Samuel de Champlain became the first European to set foot on what is today the Adirondack region. At the time of Champlain's expedition, the Adirondacks were seasonally occupied–particularly during hunting periods–by peoples of the Iroquois Confederacy, or Haudenosaunee, which consisted of the Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca, and Mohawk tribes. The Confederacy was also known as the Five Nations of the Long House and during the eighteenth century would include the Tuscaroras as its last ally, thus forming the Six Nations. The Iroquois were "a formidable military-agricultural people, skilled in diplomacy, politically sophisticated, and relatively democratic" (Jenkins, 69). The Confederacy called the Adirondack region "Couchsachrage," which translated into "The Beaver Hunting Grounds of the Iroquois." It was mainly the Mohawks who controlled the more viable areas in the region for hunting and trapping. South of the Park, they raised crops such as squash and corn. Unfortunately, there are no written records by the original occupants of the Adirondacks.

The Iroquois maintained a tense relationship with the Algonquin tribes, who inhabited the areas surrounding the Iroquois Confederacy. It is believed that the term "Adirondack" derived from the Mohawk word "ha-de-ron-dah," meaning "bark-eater," a humiliating description with which they designated the Montagnais group of the

Algonquin. Joseph Grady traces the origin of the term through an examination of the societal differences between the Iroquois and the Montagnais:

> Unlike their Long House foes, the Montagnais were not agriculturists. They preferred to subsist on the spoils of the chase rather than on the fruits of the harvest and were constantly on the go in quest of game. They were not always aware of their destination, but as long as they were on their way they seemed to be satisfied. At times the hunt proved woefully unproductive and the hungry Northerners were reduced to the necessity of munching roots and twigs to avoid starvation. (9)

Both the Iroquois and the Algonquin would soon enough witness the fall of their people, who after struggling to maintain territorial autonomy during the seventeenth century through fur trading transactions, would, in the eighteenth century, actively participate in warfare for the sole purpose of surviving.

It was Champlain who fired the first shot of a war that would last one hundred and fifty years. In early July 1609 he was guided by a group of sixty Algonquin in search of a vast body of water on the east of the Adirondack region that had been described to him by his native allies. The expedition took him up the Richelieu River and onto the lake that would from thereon bear the name of Lake Champlain, today marking the border between New York and Vermont. Despite the explorers' efforts to avoid encountering the Iroquois, on July 30, 1609, a short yet decisive battle between Champlain, the Algonquin and a group of about two hundred Iroquois took place in the surrounding areas of Ticonderoga. In Champlain's words:

> I looked at them and they looked at me. When I saw [the Iroquois] getting ready to shoot their arrows at us, I levelled my arquebuse, which I had loaded with four balls, and aimed straight at one of the three chiefs. The shot brought down two and wounded another. On this, our Indians set up such a yelling that one could not have heard a thunder-clap, and all the while the arrows flew thick on both sides. The Iroquois were greatly astonished and frightened to see two of their men killed so quickly, in spite of their arrow-proof armor. As I was reloading, one of my companions fired a shot from the woods, which so increased their astonishment that, seeing their chiefs dead, they abandoned the field and fled into the depth of the forest. (Quote extracted from Parkman, 10)

In spite of this bloody event, for years to come the trade between Indians and Europeans would be maintained. The Saint Lawrence River was the main Huron route for transporting fur to the French market, and therefore became the main target for Iroquois ambushes. Throughout the 1640s the Iroquois practically exterminated the Huron tribe through a warfare of raids and attacks. Growing tensions between the English and the French resulted in both of their interests in allying with Iroquois or Algonquin forces, respectively, as well as in profits in the form of fur. The Beverwyck settlement in the area of Albany, for example, did not aim to conquer the wilderness, but to benefit from it through the pelt trade with the natives. Seventeenth-century conceptions of wilderness as an evil entity contributed to some of the European traders' disinterest in entering the Adirondack region: the Dutch, for example apparently feared running into a terrifying creature known as the unicorn, which was said to roam the region.

Eventually the trade routes were pushed toward the Great Lakes area and even farther west in search of more supply, and Europeans spread throughout the western part of New York with the intention of permanent settlement. As the natives were quickly

losing their territory and succumbing to epidemics brought by Europeans, strains between the Iroquois Five Nations, the Algonquin, and Europeans inevitably increased. Small raids, attacks, burning of villages on all sides, captures–and subsequent tortures–marked the "beaver wars." Thus the fur trade that had been initiated in the early 1600s soon evolved into the military campaigns of the French and Indian War, by the end of which the Iroquois had lost practically all of the original lands of the Confederacy.


*Present-day view of Fort William Henry, reconstructed and rehabilitated in Lake George.*

Seventeenth and eighteenth-century warfare in the Adirondacks mainly took place in the Horican and Lake Champlain region. The Iroquois saw themselves increasingly cornered by the French and the English, and struggled to maintain an important role in the trading market. As the war between France and England came nearer, the Iroquois became the ally of choice because of their proficiency and familiar knowledge of the land. The very charismatic William Johnson, then chief of Indian Affairs in New York, ordered his men to build Fort William Henry in the Horican shores, which he renamed Lake George in honor of the British monarch. Johnson had found support in the

Mohawks, yet other Iroquois considered coalition with the French more favorable. Johnson's victory over the attack commanded by Baron Ludwig August Diskeau in the Lake George region was short-lived: two years later, on August 1757, Colonel George Monro surrendered to the French and Iroquois forces led by General Louis-Joseph Montcalm. After the massacre of Monro's troops, Fort William Henry was abandoned, yet in June 1758 the English would return to the southeast section of the Adirondacks to reclaim lost territory. Led by General James Abercrombie, the British were again defeated by Montcalm at Fort Carillon, in Ticonderoga. In spite of the British failures in the Adirondack region, the French were losing battles in the areas of Saint Lawrence, Lake Ontario, and Nova Scotia. By 1760, Montreal belonged to the English Crown, and the British had won the war.

Only a few years later, the Lake Champlain and Lake George areas would yet again become a battlefield with the American Revolution. From 1775 to 1777 the military campaigns in the southeast of the Adirondacks tested both the Americans' and the British's warfare abilities in the wilderness.

The true victims of the French and Indian War, the American Revolution, and the extension of settlements towards the west, were, needless to say, the Iroquois, the Huron, and the Algonquin. If in 1700 the Iroquois had controlled about ninety percent of the land in New York, by the 1840s all Indians were either confined to scattered reservations over the state, or to the yet much unsettled Adirondack region. The northern wilderness, which in the first half of the nineteenth century became a favorable destination for trappers and hunters, provided the battleground for occasional disputes between white nomads and Indians, some of which evolved from initial verbal defamations to deadly ambushes. The legendary trapper Nat Foster, for instance, settled a long-time enmity with an Indian neighbor, Peter Waters, "Drid," by coolly shooting him in front of several witnesses from the shore as Drid was paddling his canoe.

### 3.2.- Settling in the Adirondacks

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, early settlers were occupying the surrounding areas of what would later on become the Adirondack Park. Through purchase or just plain occupation, the Iroquois were being stripped off their territory at a speeding pace. After the Revolution, all territories which had belonged to the Crown of England or supporters of the loyalist cause passed to the ownership of New York State. An impressive example of this is the case of the Totten and Crossfield Tract, whose owners had supported the British, and who were forced to turn in their tract of over a million acres (encompassing the areas of Raquette Lake, Indian Lake, Blue Mountain Lake, Lake Pleasant and Long Lake) to the New York government.

In the interest of having the northern New York lands settled and profited from, large sections of the region passed to the hands of speculators, who would themselves divide the land into smaller tracts to be resold. Although selling the central and western lands of the state proved an easier task, the New York government was able to sell huge portions of the northern wilderness lands as well. In 1792, the wealthy Irish immigrant Alexander Macomb, in a partnership with New York businessmen William Constable and Daniel McCormick, purchased 3.9 million acres of northern New York lands to add to his 144,000 acres in the Adirondack region. Two years later, John Brown, a merchant

from Providence, found himself owning 210,000 acres of Macomb's tract due to his son-in-law's bad business skills. Brown decided to make the best of the situation, and built roads, houses, and even a sawmill and gristmill along his division of eight townships (which were named, as an omen of prosperity, Enterprise, Industry, Sobriety, Economy, Perseverance, Unanimity, Sobriety, and Regularity), on the western side of the Adirondacks. His enterprise failed, for agricultural endeavors characteristic of Thomas Jefferson's visions of American farmland were futile. After Brown's death in 1803, pessimism befell over the settlers of the tract, who for years had worked the land in vain:

> Slowly but unceasingly, an atmosphere of depression drifted across the colony and enveloped its inhabitants. The odds of cold and loneliness were great against them, the soil was of a grudging fertility, the channels of social intercourse laborious, and in despair they envisioned a future with bore scant promise of improvement. Thoughts of returning to the valley abodes which they had deserted a few years before cheered them, and eventually took shape in a general exodus. One by one they packed their meagre belongings into ox carts and departed, abandoning the settlement to the quiet forest which they had despoiled to give it place. (Grady, 30)

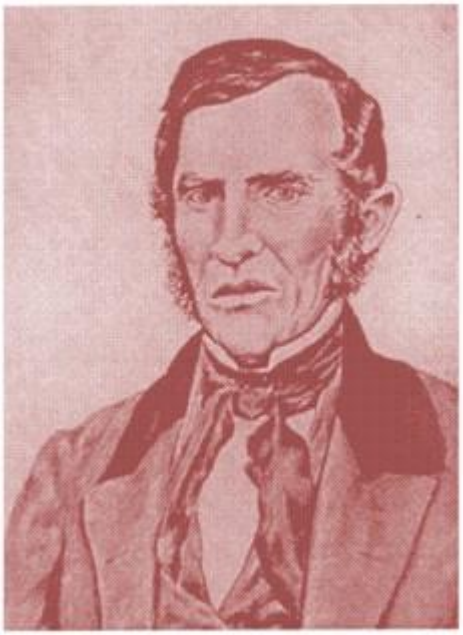
Immediate attempts to resettle the Brown Tract were useless. Another of Brown's son-in-laws, Charles Frederick Herreshoff, a distinguished Prussian socialite in his youth, spent the last eight years of his life in Township 7 of the Tract. His obsession to make the land a prosperous settlement through agricultural labor only increased with the prospects of finding a rich iron deposit for smelting and forging. Repeated failure finally took a toll over the by now depressed, lonely Herreshoff, who resolved to put an end to his miserable suffering. After Herreshoff's suicide, John Brown Francis, John Brown's grandson and direct heir of Township 7, initiated a final attempt to colonize the land. For the same reasons that his uncle and grandfather were unsuccessful, his project was doomed from the start.

Indeed, despite desperate attempts from settlers, farming in most of the Adirondack wilderness was generally ineffective. Even by the 1850s, the Adirondack interior maintained its frontier quality as the rest of the state became prosperous. For famers, the vast forest lands were an agricultural nuisance, the winter was a hostile companion, and the soil was thin and rocky. All in all, the environment reduced the American Dream's virtues to fruitlessness. The settlers belonged mainly to the poor socioeconomic background of New York and New England. They bought the cheap lands of the Adirondack borders and gradually made their way into the central areas, and despite their continuing improvement of living skills in the harsh wilderness (they did find it, after all, a source for other advantages), cultivating lands never became too much of an affluent business. Terrie writes that

> Inside and out, Adirondack families endured a difficult life. Besides a forest that must have often seemed ominous, there were the unavoidable realities of the Adirondack climate and growing season combined with such horrors as fire, illness, and the psychological trauma resulting from isolation and day-to-day drudgery. It was a hardy lot that survived these travails and made a go of it in the Adirondacks. (2008: 30)

Farmers on the borders of the soon-to-be park, on the other hand, lived to see more flourishing harvests. It was most notably in the Champlain Valley where the soil provided the ideal conditions for high farming, the same area where mining would become a major source of income in the mid-1800s.

Farming results proved geologist Ebenezer Emmons partly wrong. A native of Massachusetts and professor of Natural History and Geology at Williams College and Albany Medical College, Emmons was commissioned to develop the New York Natural History Survey's Northern Wilderness section. Between 1836 and 1840 Emmons carried out his fieldwork research, which would result in the *Report of the Second Geological District of New York* (1842) and in *Natural History of New York* (1848). It was he who coined the name "Adirondacks" to commemorate the original Indian presence in the region, though other terms, such as the "Northern Wilderness" or the "Northern Woods" would still be of preference for decades to come. It was also Emmons who simultaneously endowed the highest summit with a Euro-American touch by christening it Mt. Marcy, after then governor William L. Marcy. Throughout his field work, Emmons explored the central Adirondacks at a time when settling communities were mostly keeping to the borders of the future park. Until the appearance of Emmons's work, cartographers had found it difficult to describe in detail geological and environmental features of the New York northern wilderness. Only in 1776, Thomas Pownall's *Topographical Description of North America* had confirmed scientists' "ignorance" regarding the sources of the Hudson River. Neither was there a detailed description of the Adirondacks in Louis Brion's *Carte du Theatre de la Guerre Entre les Anglais et les Americans* (1777). Emmons's task finally placed the Adirondacks on the map and inside the context of the American ideal of industry and progress. Yet in spite of his correct claims of the Adirondacks as a place to enjoy beautiful and sublime natural landscapes–a discourse also picked up by the transcendentalists and the romantics–and as a promising land for mining (though this would prove to be only relatively true), his predictions of a domesticated land sustained by agricultural means and husbandry in the Adirondack interior were mistaken.



*Ebenezer Emmons. Courtesy of the Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, N.Y. See Links to Online Sources and Acknowledgements.*

It has been mentioned above that Champlain Valley was the site for abounding mines in the nineteenth century. These were mainly iron mines and forges belonging to McIntyre

Works, which also enjoyed considerable success in the more central town of Newcomb for a number of years. McIntyre Works not only made the Adirondacks one of the major resources for iron mining and smelting before the Civil War, but provided employment for thousands of men trying to make a living in an Adirondack community.

But perhaps the most important industrial enterprise of the nineteenth century was logging. As Adirondack communities grew, they cut the surrounding trees to use for building houses, cabins, stations, and hotels, among other things. Soon saw mills followed, and their owners, realizing the Adirondacks' potential to monopolize the state's (and even lead the country's) need for timber, projected their businesses outside of local boundaries. The Hudson River presented an efficient medium of transportation for the logs, a direct way to drive them into New York City.

*Workers driving the logs down the Hudson River. From the Adirondack Museum collection. Courtesy of the Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake.*

By 1850, two thousand sawmills were operating in the Adirondacks, and several companies had permission to drive their logs down the Hudson. Two years later the Big Boom, constructed in Glens Falls to receive the logs driven down the river, counted a total of about 250,000 logs having floated in its waters. By the mid-1870s, they were counting about a million per year. From white pine and spruce to the hardwoods used by the mining industry for charcoal, thousands of acres of forests were left barren.

Even after the creation of the Park and the constitutional proclamation of the "forever wild" clause, additional cutting of previously-ignored softwoods came with the development of the pulp industry and paper companies. Transportation was aided by hundreds of miles of logging railroads. Logging could be maintained in private lands and owners could exploit the territory as much as they desired. Adding to the

devastation were continuous forest fires, which between 1888 and 1915 accounted for an astonishing figure of a million acres of burnt land in the Adirondacks. Although accidental, the fires were generally the result of man's interference in nature:

*Model reconstruction of logging at the Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake.*

> Inasmuch as the locomotives were dependent on wood and later on coal, one result was inevitable –frequent bursts of sparks and live coals from stack and fire-box flew deep into live forests and denuded lands alike. While other factors such as lightning and man's carelessness shared some of the responsibility, railroads in the early days were regarded as the chief cause of Adirondack fires. (Hyde, 91)

Environmental results from logging and agricultural clearings were evidently overwhelming by the 1900s. In all, by 1885, the year of the creation of the Adirondack Forest Preserve, an estimate of 28% of the preserve's land was cleared, and a reported 9.5% was burnt and/or wasted land.

Local wildlife diminished not only due to the lumbering and mining, but to the ravenous hunting of community members. Terrie argues that "the Adirondack forests and their wilderness condition often seemed endless and a constant and real impediment to personal comfort, material success, and cultural advancement" (2008: 42). As an example of the consequences in the wildlife, he goes on to state that

> Nowhere was this antipathy to wilderness more pronounced than in the unexamined disposition of virtually every Adirondack community to kill off wolves and mountain lions. These predators represented everything that was untamed and threatening about the wilderness and consequently were universally hated . . . The campaign to eradicate predators began early; in the part of Montgomery County that would become Hamilton County, bounties were paid for wolves as early as 1823. In 1837, the first official town meeting held in Long Lake voted to spend town money on only two items: building roads and paying bounties for the corpses of wolves and mountain lions. So it went throughout the Adirondacks, as every town and county passed ordinances aimed at eradicating predators, the most powerful symbol of the persisting wilderness. (2008: 43)

Strongly influenced by seventeenth and eighteenth-century mentality of man's necessary dominance over nature and man's quest to create a "garden" out of the evil wilderness, Adirondack communities were little by little transforming the landscape towards their set of ideal conditions for living in that environment. On the other hand, and as we will see later on, romanticized and mystified depictions of nature were coexisting with this kind of mentality in the nineteenth century. Still, effects on the landscape and the wilderness because of man's industry were profound, and even if it was just to protect New York's interests in water supplies, law became a necessary force to stop, or at least slow down, forest destruction.

### 3.3.- Elitism and Democracy in the Adirondacks

One of the outcomes of the withholding of private lands inside the Park was the profound socioeconomic contrast between the owners of the lands and the locals at the turn of the twentieth century. Indeed, the clashing situation between Adirondackers, who after all made use of wilderness resources in order to survive and make a living, and tourists, members of prestigious clubs owning great tracts of the Park, and great camp plutocrats and their friends and families sharpened differences in opinion on what wilderness *was* and what it was *good for*. The Adirondacks constitute an interesting case study of how different social classes have conceived wilderness, how they have projected such a conception, and how this conception has been received by opposite social stratums. By the 1880s and 1890s, the Adirondacks were both an environment of

hostility and a rich man's land, a terrain of challenge and endurance and the ideal place to just create the illusion of self-reliance. These disparate views were furthered through the legislative measures for the creation of the Park, especially due to the fact that the future of the Adirondacks was to be in the hands of wealthy outsiders who spent their vacation upstate, while little power would be given to year-round residents. The true challenge would come in the post-World War II era, once the automobile experience had truly permeated the American landscape and once tourism was established as the first source of income in wilderness habitats, thus threatening the heterogeneous social standards that had prevailed in the Adirondacks in previous decades.

As we will see, the story of how the Adirondacks came to be a supreme summer retreat for the rich New Yorkers of the Gilded Age can be partly explained by the effects of the romanticist mentality and transcendentalist aesthetics of the second half of the nineteenth century. For now, it suffices to say that mystified appreciations of romanticist principles such as self-reliance and intuition, and the escapism towards nature in search for essential, quasi-mystical values permeated deep within aesthetes and urbanites of the period. Plutocrats, or at least visionaries with a generous income to back them up, could afford to believe and exploit romanticist stereotypes in the same way that businessmen could buy large tracts of Adirondack land for the extraction of natural resources.

These romantic pretenses in the Adirondacks were aided by hotel businesses destined to the poor classes as much as the privileged. Although the so-called "great camps" represent the Gilded Age of plutocracy in the wilderness, modest inns and guest houses had been the pioneers in endorsing the adventure that nature in the Adirondacks could provide. In the late 1830s, Otis Arnold became the first inn keeper of the region as he progressively turned his manor house in the Fulton Chain area from a guest home to a small hotel. Arnold's Manor became notorious to travellers, huntsmen, sportsmen, guides, and other nomads not only because of the host's hospitality, but also because of his daughters' proficiency in horseback riding and labor usually relegated to men. Otis Arnold was just as well probably the first hotel host to entertain his guests by taking them on hunting and fishing excursions, and by guiding them in the surrounding wilderness. As he became more famous, so did guests belonging to more prestigious businesses and social classes find themselves venturing into the region and visiting his manor.

Enthralled by what they read by authors like James Fenimore Cooper, Joel T. Headley, Charles Fenno Hoffman, and especially, William H. H. Murray, New Yorkers and New Englanders took to the Adirondacks in search of the ultimate wilderness escapade:

> All this–abundant fish and game easily taken, splendid scenery, colorful narrators of tall stories, promises of adventure in the wilderness, physically uncomfortable, perhaps, and slightly dangerous–was stimulating stuff for world-weary city people. It was time to head for the woods, and to do that, the eager pilgrims had to be assured of some kind of civilized hospitality before they hit the trail. Tents, bark lean-tos, and run-down frontier dwellings wouldn't do. There had to be real hotels –comfortable inns, or at least a respectable boarding house. (Williams, 75)

Williams's point is significant: often vacationers would search for an experience that would not necessarily have to be too realistic; the illusion of immersing oneself in

nature would do. Certain comforts could not be sacrificed, and it was not long before hotels and inns were booming throughout the region.

One of the most charismatic figures in the business was Apollo A. Smith (Paul Smith). Smith was a hard-working Vermonter with a magnetic personality. From being an Eerie Canal boatman he went on to open a modest men's-only place called Hunter. In only a few years his persistence paid off, and in 1859 he built the St. Regis Lake House (which would come to be known plainly as Paul Smith's Hotel). The hotel was well-known for its excellent cooking and boarding conditions, but most of the credit can be attributed to Smith's exceptional character and skills as a host. By the time he died he was a millionaire with 38,000 acres of Adirondack property. His son, Phelps Smith, made sure to follow his will, and in the 1940s the acres where St. Regis Lake House had stood became the site for Paul Smith's College.

Paul Smith was a pioneer in bringing people into the Adirondacks, but it was the so-called "Murray Rush" or "Murray's Fools" phenomenon which superseded in boosting the tourism in the Adirondacks. With the publication of *Adventures in the Wilderness; or, Camp-Life in the Adirondacks* (1869), back-to-nature enthusiasts swarmed upstate expecting the easy lifestyle that Murray had described. What they found was quite different. Instead of a place that provided complete health restoration (mainly for tuberculosis patients) and where camping, hunting, and fishing just involved a few easy-to-do-it-yourself steps, what they found was a wilderness where medical recovery was not guaranteed, and where successful "survival" and sporting skills required an experienced background in the matter. Murray received harsh criticism both from tourists and the press, although he was not left without vindicators. Further on in this study we will consider the literary aspects and the controversy surrounding Murray's book, but for now it is important to consider the social impact it had and its power to move crowds of people to the Adirondacks. In Peter Bronski's words, it was thanks to Murray that there was

> A flood of tourists that flocked en masse to the Adirondacks, spurring the development of stagecoach lines and hotels throughout the region . . . It may have been a gross exaggeration, and other writers would soon come to strongly contradict Murray's declaration, but the message was out and the floodgates opened –the Adirondacks were the place to go for wilderness adventure. By 1875 there were almost two hundred hotels throughout the region, including the renowned Paul Smith's Hotel, and a railroad constructed from Saratoga Springs to North Creek. (26)

As tourism grew in the Adirondacks, so did technological progress affect modes of transportation within and throughout the wilderness. In the 1880s H. Dwight Grant had designed what would come to be known as the Grant Model Adirondack Guide Boat, and in 1890 the town of Old Forge boasted of guide boat building as its main local business. However, it was not long before tourists displayed their preference for steamboats, which would themselves come to disuse with the advent of the motor industry. Similarly, the buckboard succumbed to the might of the railroad, the construction of which is credited to Dr. Thomas C. Durant in the 1860s and to Dr. William Seward Webb in the 1890s.

Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, cheap railroad fares and affordable hotels with a rustic appeal attracted the middle class to the Adirondacks. But these middle-class hotels were very rudimentary and modest compared to what came to be known as

the Adirondack great camps. Owned as a second, third, or even fourth home by plutocrats of the New York elite, these great camps were an exhibition of luxury, opulence and exquisite taste that inevitably distorted the concept of wilderness itself. Constructed in huge tracts of private land, the camps promoted the wilderness experience that upper-class New Yorkers demanded. It was a back-to-nature experience, but one where the guests were not required to give up the best meals, the best lanterns, the best beds, or the best living rooms and fireplaces for male–or female–social gatherings. The camps were built on private shores and offered private steamboats for the leisure of guests, who had arrived there by private railroad cars. Like in middle-class hotels, guides were hired to take their guests out on successful hunting or fishing excursions (even if the guest had absolutely no talent for such skills, it was to be made as easy as possible for him to return to camp with the carcass of his dreams). Only the most exclusive guests and their families were welcome, from Wall Street magnates to politicians, intellectuals and distinguished artists and writers.

*Adirondack guide boat exhibited at the Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake.*

One of the most prominent great camp tycoons was William West Durant, son and heir to Dr. Thomas Clark Durant. Dr. Durant had been actively involved in the construction of the railroad from Saratoga Springs, but had lost great part of his wealth with the panic of 1873. In an attempt to save the family empire, William constructed a complex of sophisticated cottages of a refined rustic, Bavarian architecture, which he would call Pine Knot, on the shores of Raquette Lake. Durant set a trend in cottage architecture and interior decoration that other camps would soon imitate, and by the time he sold it to Collis P. Huntington in 1885 it was the size of a small village. By that year the Durants had finished three other Adirondack camps: Cedars, Fairview, and Echo.

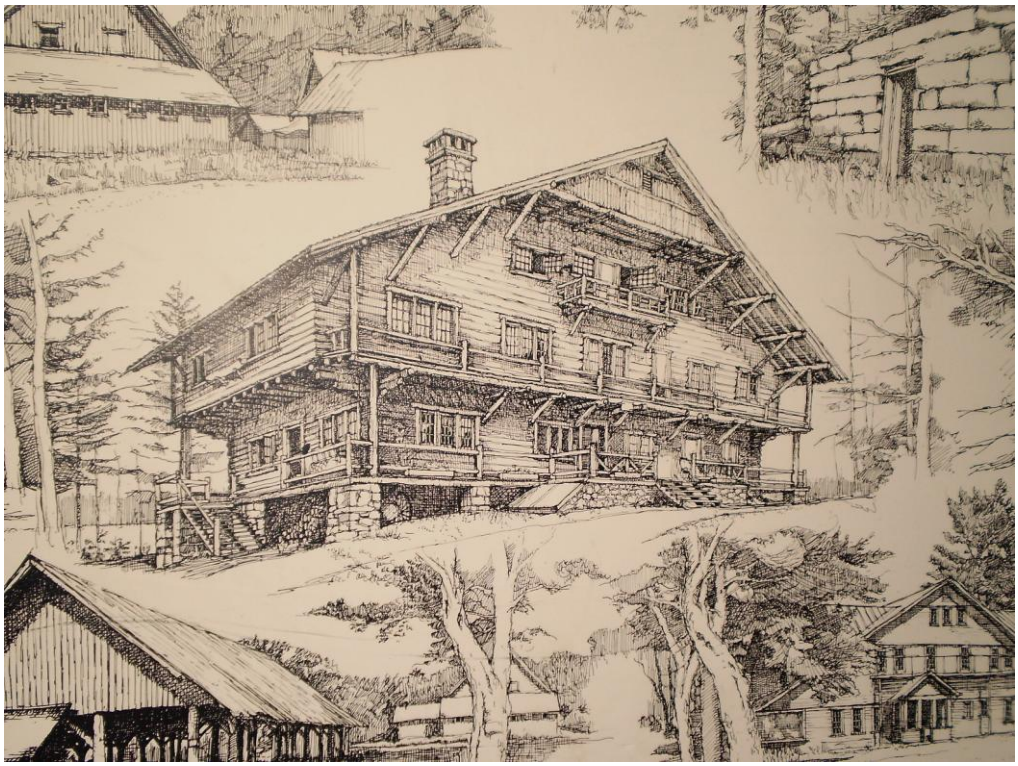
*Thomas Clark Durant (1820-1885). Courtesy of Great Camp Sagamore at Raquette Lake.*

In 1893 W.W. Durant started making plans for three more camp compounds: Camp Uncas (named after Fenimore Cooper's character in *The Last of the Mohicans*, Sagamore, and Kill Kare). Two years later Dr. Durant died, and a series of lawsuits filed by his sister, Ella, for mismanagement of their father's estate, forced William to sell the camps. Uncas was turned to J.P. Morgan, Sagamore to Alfred G. Vanderbilt, and Kill Kare to Timothy and Cora Woodruff. Out of all the camps, it was Sagamore, at Raquette Lake, which was the largest and the most elaborate. Craig Gilborn states that William West Durant felt a

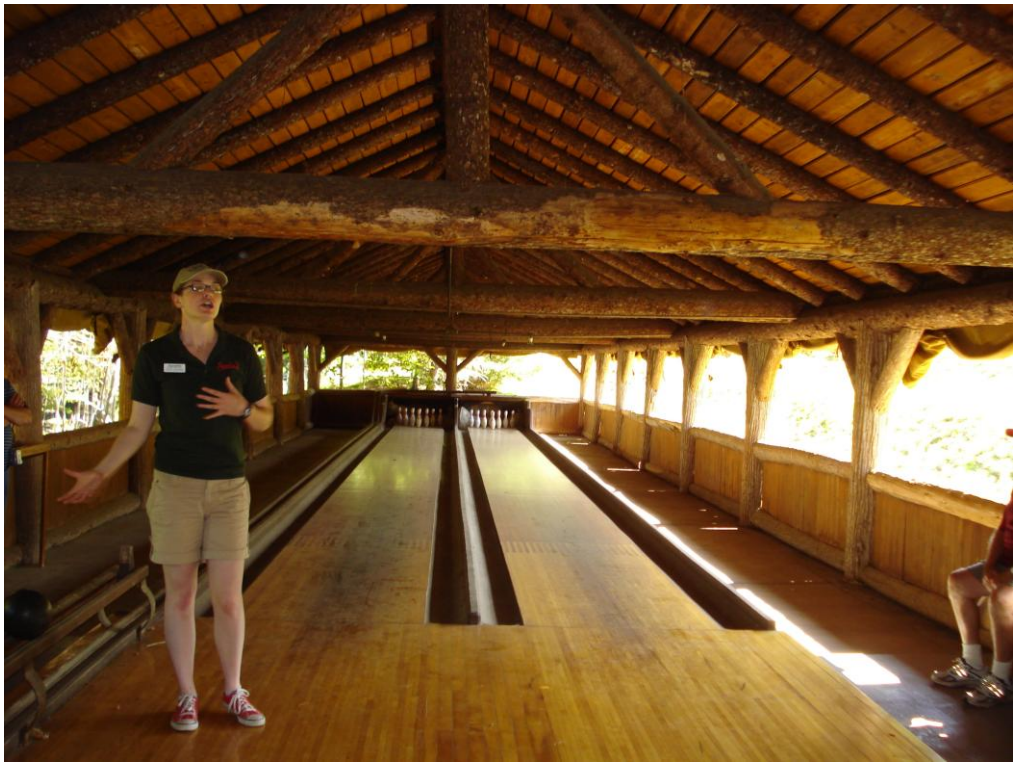
> Particular pride with the engineering feats at Sagamore, most of which were buried or placed out of sight but constituted essential features which enabled these woodland communities to grow and accommodate, as they have done to the present day, up to a hundred or so occupants at a time. These conveniences impressed William's contemporaries who had recently begun to install them in their own homes in the city and were surprised when they found such things as heated bathrooms with hot running water, gas illumination and flush toilets in the hearts of the Adirondack wilds. (105)

Alfred Vanderbilt bought the complex in 1901 and he spent the next few years expanding the camp. Among his additions to Sagamore were more cottages (and remodeling of other cottages), a bowling alley, a tennis court, telephone and intercom systems, and a hydroelectric plant down the outlet stream. With Vanderbilt's tragic death in the Lusitania in 1915, Sagamore was left to his widow, Margaret Emerson. It was really during these later years that the camp truly developed, in the words of gossip columns, as "the playground of a millionaire."

*Main cottage at Camp Sagamore, today a National Historic Landmark.*



*Early sketches and designs of the Sagamore complex. Courtesy of Great Camp Sagamore National Historic Landmark.*



*Bowling alley at Camp Sagamore. The architectural design maintains the rustic appeal.*

But the great camps were not the only way through which the more privileged of New York society could comfortably retreat to the wilderness. In the late 1800s, private clubs bought extensive tracts of lands for their members to exploit and manage collectively. Private land allowed members to maintain their social distance from the middle and working-class tourists seeking the Adirondacks as well. From the list of private clubs, which included, among others, the Adirondack Club (later to be renamed the Tahawus Club), the Adirondack Mountain Reserve, the Ampersand Preserve, Whitney Park, and the Lake Placid Club, it was the Adirondack League Club which had the legal rights to astounding amounts of lands. In item 4.6. we will return to the friction caused between private landowners and local townspeople, particularly through the writings of Reverend Byron-Curtiss.

By the end of World War II, the new symbol of democratization, the automobile, was taking over the American wilderness. In the Adirondacks, it meant the transition towards a more homogeneous type of population; instead of the sharp contrast of social classes that had characterized the early twentieth century, a more democratic (though not completely harmonious) form of living–and vacationing–would take over. What this implied was also a turn toward a more consistent appreciation of the Adirondack wilderness, where conservation, preservation, and the enjoyment of nature would lead the discourse of modern Adirondack history. Today, some of the great camps that had once created and promoted their own definitions of wilderness are maintained –Camp Uncas and Sagamore are now National Historic Landmarks. They stand as a physical legacy of the most lavish and extravagant man-made contributions to the Adirondack Park.

### 3.4.- The Creation of the Forest Preserve and the Adirondack Park

Environmental conservation and ecology were introduced to the American political panorama by George Perkins Marsh (1801-1882). Born in Woodstock, Vermont, he was the son of a United States senator. Marsh became a congressman and a diplomat himself, and in 1861, President Abraham Lincoln appointed him United States Minister to Italy, a position Marsh would maintain for the rest of his life. It was in Italy where Marsh studied the possibilities of conserving natural resources through methods of forestry that entailed an adequate and structured use of the land. According to Marsh, uncontrolled and massive forest devastation would inevitably lead to drastic climactic change, agricultural inefficiency, and damage and waste of other natural resources. Marsh's interests were, for the most part, economical and utilitarian, but it was his vision his masterpiece, *Man and Nature, or Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action* (1864), which finally brought the conservationist incentive into the political agenda. Neal Burdick claims that

> Others who considered themselves utilitarians in the mid-1800s thought conservation an extravagance: lumber kings, for example, found it more expedient to "strip and run" than to cut selectively. But Marsh argued for conservation precisely on utilitarian terms. The forests, he explained, would be even more commercially productive with less harvesting, because they would be healthier. It was managed forest, not wilderness, that he proposed. (99)

Verplanck Colvin (1847-1920), a native of Albany, became the strongest disciple of Marsh's doctrines in Adirondack land management. With a background in law studies and sciences, Colvin was a mountaineer with a passion for the Adirondack region, which he first came to know in 1865. Three years later, his writings were demanding the need for governmental interference for the conservation of the forests. His alarming observations in his ascent to Mt. Seward resulted in the 1871 *Annual Report on the New York State Museum of Natural History*, which caught the attention of scientists and politicians alike. In the Report, Colvin not only predicted the damage that could be done to the entire State of New York if unrestricted exploitation of the land continued, but he also proposed a plan for the protection of the region:

> The Adirondack Wilderness contains the springs which are the sources of our principal rivers, and the feeders of the canals. Each summer the water supply for these rivers and canals is lessened, and commerce has suffered . . .
>
> The immediate cause has been the chopping and burning off of vast tracts of forest in the wilderness, which have hereto sheltered from the sun's heat and evaporation the deep and lingering snows [and] the brooks and rivulets . . .
>
> With the destruction of the forests, these mosses dry, wither and disappear; with them vanishes the cold, condensing atmosphere which forms the clouds. Now the winter snows that accumulate on the mountains, unprotected from the sun, melt suddenly and rush down laden with disaster . . . The land, deprived of all that gave it value, reverts to the State for unpaid taxes.
>
> The remedy for this is the creation of an Adirondack Park or timber preserve, under charge of a forest warden and deputies. The "burning off" of mountains should be visited with suitable penalties; the cutting of pines under ten inches or one foot in diameter should be prohibited. The officers of the law might be supported per capita tax, upon sportsmen, artists, and tourists visiting the region; a tax which they would willingly pay if the game should be protected from unlawful slaughter, and the grand primeval forest be saved from ruthless desolation.

> The interest of commerce and navigation demand that these forests should be preserved; and for posterity should be set aside, this Adirondack region, as a park for New York, as is the Yosemite for California and the Pacific States. (Quoted in Graham, 70-71)

Although preservationist tinges were present in his advocacy, Colvin's views, like Marsh's, were for the most part of a utilitarian nature. Throughout his reports as superintendent of the Adirondack Topographical Survey (a task he would perform from 1872 to 1900), he stressed that community growth (through recreation, building of hotels, and railroads, etc.) was compatible with a land management that would guarantee the endurance of natural resources.

It was Colvin's reported threat to the Adirondack watersheds that most startled state officials. As the source of the Hudson River, the Adirondacks were in need of protection in order to ensure the viability and operation of the Hudson and the Eerie Canal, constructed in the 1820s as a route of commerce and transportation throughout New York. Such was the main concern when in 1872 (the same year that Ulysses Grant signed the bill for the creation of Yellowstone Park), officials assembled for the appointment of commissioners of parks to manage the timber and water supplies of Adirondack counties. The resulting *First Annual Report of the Commissioners of State Parks* also alluded to the Adirondacks' potential as a space for recreation and as a destination for health improvement, particularly for tuberculosis patients. With all these interests in mind, the Commission on State Parks proposed the creation of a park of 1.7 million acres.

In 1883, the legislature prohibited the State's resale of the Adirondack lands that had been acquired through tax sales, and in 1885 the legislature created the Forest Preserve, made up of 681,000 acres which were to be "forever kept as wild forest lands." It was Charles Sprague Sargent, a Harvard professor of arboriculture, who became the ringleader and main advocate of the creation of a forever wild forest preserve. Despite the clear idealism of the phrase, timber from these "forever wild" lands would still be sold to support the Forest Commission. As Terrie points out, "the law establishing the Forest Preserve emphasized the protection of the land, not the timber" (1985: 97).

For the next few years, heavy lumbering and logging was still taking place in the Forest Preserve lands. The same legislature procuring lumbering contracts was attempting to protect the watershed. In the hopes of creating a park that would consist solely of state lands, Governor David B. Hill reinitiated the discussion of Adirondack management in 1890.

In 1892, the blue line establishes the perimeter of what would from thereon be the Adirondack Park, encompassing a total of 2.8 million acres of both public and private property. Two years later, on November 6, 1894, the integrity of the Forest Preserve was to be constitutionally maintained when New Yorkers voted for the approval of the Article VII, Section 7, the "forever wild clause," which would this time specify on the protection of timber. Later on, with the approval of the 1938 New York State Constitution, the provision would become Article XIV (Conservation), Section 1, which to this day reads:

> The lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not

> be leased, sold or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed.

Both the Forest Preserve lands and private lands would continue to expand inside the Park, pushing the boundaries of the blue line as well. In 1912, about 1 million acres were added to the Park; and in 1931 an extra 1.5 million acres were included. Finally, the 1973 blue line marked an area of almost 6 million acres.

Needless to say, the provision's and the State's interference in the management of Adirondack land did not satisfy many locals, whose opinions had for the most part been overlooked throughout the entire bureaucratic process of the 1890s. When the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks was established in 1902, the members were mainly of plutocratic and socialite New York City circles. Some of the names included were those of William Rockefeller and Alfred G. Vanderbilt, both of whom possessed extensive lands in the Adirondacks in which they would spend a couple of months in the summer. (In Vanderbilt's case, as we have seen, his empire became a distinguished Adirondack camp, where the New York elite migrated for the summer.) The Association became the prime core of "forever wild" advocates, aiming towards further inclusion of lands as part of the Forest Preserve, lands where recreation and the enjoyment of nature could be guaranteed. Thus not only did the Adirondack landscape become a place of contrast between the rich and the more modest social classes, but more importantly, locals saw their year-round needs affected by regulations (territorial boundaries, game laws) adopted to satisfy the interests of both wealthy proprietors and tourists.

Increasingly, by the early decades of the twentieth century, the Adirondacks were becoming a summer resort. More hotels and roads were being built, and businesses were orienting their sales towards tourism. The "back to nature" ideal of the 1910s and the 1920s was a nation-wide phenomenon. Americans were inclined to take to the wilderness "not only because they had the technological capacity to do so, but also because cultural production–newspapers, magazines, postcards, advertisements, and promotional literature–encouraged nature tourism on a far broader scale than it had in previous decades" (Sutter, 170). The Adirondacks were no exception, and the Conservation Commission made it a point to endorse the Forest Preserve as a supreme place for camping, hiking, fishing, canoeing, and other outdoor activities.

Despite the fact that the State had little control over the private lands when the Park was created, it was interested in maintaining a pleasing wilderness aesthetic for tourists. Restrictions regarding advertising billboards on private land, for example, would begin in the 1920s. Likewise, the "forever wild" clause was in many instances subjected to re-examination. Attempts to build dams and highways were at the order of the day. Such proposals were sometimes approved (such as the building of the Whiteface Memorial Highway in 1927) and other times rejected (this was the case of the 1929 Winter Olympics Committee's efforts to construct bobsled facilities in the Forest Preserve).

After the long years of the Depression, during which both tourism and the native Adirondack populations had strongly diminished, America projected post-World War II optimism towards the wilderness once more. The post-war decades were the time when the effects of modern technology over the wilderness became evident. While seaplanes,

snowmobiles, motorboats, and more vehicles roamed the terrain, forestry brought in new machinery such as chainsaws, trucks, and tractors.



*Posters advertising the Adirondacks as a summer retreat exhibited at the Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake.*

The middle class was finding it easier and easier to access the wilderness – subsequently, new businesses aimed for tourists spawned throughout the Adirondacks in the 1950s–and industries relying on nature for their resources were pushing wilderness regulations. Consequently, by the 1960s, counteraction from environmentally-conscious groups was aiming to ensure the protection of wilderness areas through a new bill. The campaign resulted in the National Wilderness Act (1964), signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson. In Section 2 (c), the Act defined what were to be the characteristics of a "wilderness area": "a wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain" (full text available in Dilsaver, 277-285).

The fact that the Adirondacks were a park of both private and public lands made the establishment of regulations more complicated. Despite proposals, the Adirondacks were never turned into a National Park. The State's efforts to interfere in land management of private properties resulted in the 1968 formation of the Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks, presided by millionaire Harold K. Hochschild. In 1971, the Commission created the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). The objective of the Agency was to establish, through the State Land Master Plan and the Private Land Use and Development Plan, what the land, both of private and public property, could be managed for. As to the public land, about 1.1 million acres would be proclaimed "wilderness areas" under the definition and regulations described in the Wilderness Act of 1964. The rest of the Forest Preserve fell into other categories (see item 8 of Guiding Students' Discussion).

The designation of wilderness areas did not sit well with many of the locals or with the logging industry, but they were even less content with legislative reforms pertaining to their own properties. The Agency had official power to tell private owners what they could and could not do with their land:

> The key feature of the Private Land Plan, which was essentially an exercise in regional zoning, was a map of the entire Adirondack Park, whereon every acre of private land was color coded and assigned to a land-use category establishing the permissible level of development. The bases for evaluating land included, among a long list of criteria, proximity to Forest Preserve, presence of wetlands, suitability for wildlife habitat, previous use, slope and elevation, quality and depth of soils, and accessibility. (Terrie 2008: 168)

Despite the initial hostility by locals and businessmen against APA bureaucracy and restrictions, some accepted the APA's actions as necessary to at least slow down in the Adirondacks the environmental degradation that was taking over other natural spaces in America. Although tensions would become more moderate in the following decades to the creation of the APA, the recession has caused new friction between locals and the Agency, and there is still a substantial amount of Adirondackers who oppose the APA's measures and methods (see Philip Terrie's interview in item 4.8. of this section and item 8 of Guiding Students' Discussion for more on this subject).

How the wilderness has been defined and how it has been deemed as an instrument of aesthetic, utilitarian, or materialistic ends has marked the different historical conceptions of the Adirondacks. Whether described as a hostile, barren land, as the epitome of evil savagery, as a terrain of natural resources, as a transcendentalist retreat,

as the "Central Park" of the upstate, as a rich man's playground, or as a model to balance the human and the natural, the Adirondacks represent a condensed microcosm of American mentality's shifts in the appreciation of nature. Terrie has accurately stated that the story of the Adirondacks is one of contestation; the challenge of man with and against the wild. As the following section will show, there is an attempt on the part of the writers to come to terms with a terrain, and to understand, through the test and challenge of the wilderness, how and if they can belong to it.

## 4.- Adirondack Literature and Writers

As Paul Jamieson, editor of *The Adirondack Reader* (see Works Cited) claimed, "more has been written about the Adirondacks than about any other park in the United States." Already in its third edition, *The Adirondack Reader* includes a selection of more than one hundred and twenty pieces spanning through four centuries, and it is highly recommended for scholars or students to expand the knowledge they gather from this study with additional readings available in this source. Clearly this case study can only serve as a simplified introduction to Adirondack writing, and by focusing on but a few selected texts, which have been distributed through all three sections (Main Page, Scholars' Debate, and Guiding Students' Discussion) in order to maximize the potential fields of research for students, many names–including highly relevant ones–have been left out. Except for items 4.1. and 4.8., the Main Page is almost exclusively concerned with nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century literature. The chief motive behind this structure has been to offer students insight into the period when, in the author's opinion, a solid Adirondack aesthetic tradition was genuinely forged. In addition to this, students unacquainted with the roots of American environmental aesthetics and ecocriticism may in this way become familiarized with the origin of modern American ecological thinking and the weight of nationalism that wilderness bears. I cannot stress enough that the literary approaches that are described, although exemplified through Adirondack writing, are a reflection of the general mindset and aesthetic shifts of the entire nation. Because of this, occasional digressions into what was simultaneously happening beyond the Adirondack borders are used to show and remind students that the literature of the region answers to a wider, national evolution.

The content is intended to follow a comprehensive pattern leading to the twentieth century in such a way that the reader may be able to appreciate how, from catholic and puritan images of wilderness as an "evil" entity, the wilderness goes on to be exalted through deism and transcendentalism, to be regarded as a source of patriotic pride, to be celebrated in popular fiction, to be marketed as a product, to be deemed as the source of a folk identity, and finally to be personified as a healer. More contemporary twentieth-century Adirondack writing and culture is illustrated in item 4.8. of this section through the interviews of three prominent writers: Philip G. Terrie, Neal Burdick, and Alice Wolf Gilborn, to whom I express my deepest gratitude. Additional items dealing with twentieth-century writing are presented in the Scholars' Debate and Guiding Students' Discussion sections.

### 4.1.- The Clash Between God and the Wilderness: Isaac Jogues and the Jesuit Redemption

One of the most compelling testimonies witness to the violence of the belligerent years in the second half of the seventeenth century is Father Isaac Jogues's capture narrative, today a classic record of Adirondack history capitulated in *The Jesuit Relations*. The narrative stands as a transparent illustration of the connotations that wilderness held for Christian mentality. Ambivalent by nature, Judeo-Christian conception of the wilderness represented the untamed, uncontrolled wasteland in need of conversion into a garden, while simultaneously it provided the necessary space for meditation and prayer away from the distraction and temptation of man. However, the solitude resulting from distancing oneself from the "depravations" of society also had its imminent dangers, for it was, after all, in the wilderness where the Devil lurked and tempted men more dexterously.

Whether with economic, territorial, or religious aims, preconceived notions of the American wilderness dominated the minds of Europeans immigrating into the new land. The fact that native tribes practiced effective methods of land and game management– from agricultural harvesting to the use of fire for hunting, clearing lands and pathways, and for rejuvenating soil for cultivation–generally did not impress European settlers, whose own technology they deemed to be far more advanced. Much less did it erode adversative dichotomies rooted in Christian belief, whereupon culture represented the benign, the orderly, and progress, whilst wilderness was rendered as the ultimate evil.

Indeed, the Bible referred to Eden as a garden of delights, where nature was to be ruled by man, the only creature to be made in accordance to the image of God. Harmony between all living things was the sacred covenant, but only so as to benefit the needs of man, who was to make use of the garden through the harvesting of its products:

> God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God say that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground–everything that has a breath of life in it–I give every green plant for food." And it was so. (Genesis, I:25-30)

A hierarchical mindset based on the utilitarianism of nature justified western man's actions over the new land. God had intended for man to live in paradise, and it was man's responsibility to redeem himself from the original sin and return to Eden. The hostile environment encountered by the Pilgrims and the Puritans, for example, was to be molded into a garden. In the same way that Moses had led the Israelites over the desert for forty years into Canaan, so was their quest a test of their faith, and faith was to be proven by bringing nature out of the wilderness and into the order and beauty of the garden. From agricultural endeavors to the building of towns, the Pilgrims sought to form a community away from the sins they had encountered in England and in Holland

as much as away from the temptations hidden in the wilderness that could lead to another fall. In their respective works, William Bradford and John Winthrop alluded to biblical passages of the stories of Moses, Paul, and David and Jonathan as parables of their own flocks. Exegesis of the biblical texts provided not only an interpretation of the wilderness, but also information regarding how it was to be overcome. Instruction so as to how to triumph over the wilderness was readily available in numerous passages of the holy scripts.

While from the 1620s and 1630s onwards the Plymouth Plantation and the Massachusetts Bay Colony were developing their utopian communities in the New England region, French Catholics were arduously constructing their own idyllic paradise in the area of Quebec. Conversion of Indian souls was their chief objective, and it was primarily with this aim that the Société de Notre Dame de Montréal founded the city of Montreal in the early 1640s. Despite the fact that their efforts in extending Catholicism did not prove to be too fruitful–distractions caused by the success of the fur trading industry eroded the religious interests of potential converts–Catholics, particularly of the Jesuit order, were decidedly persistent in their mission.

The Jesuit order stipulated a double purpose: members were to seek and protect their own spiritual growth while spreading their beliefs through conversion. Thus the Jesuits entered the Adirondacks through the figure of Father Isaac Jogues (1607-1646), who would become the first European to glance upon Lake George. Born in Orléans, he became part of the order in 1624, and was sent to Canada to fulfil his duty as a missionary among the North American Indians. From Quebec he travelled to the Georgian Bay and to the Adirondacks to work among the Huron. In August 1642, as he was journeying up the Saint Lawrence River with supplies for the converted Huron, his party was ambushed by the Mohawk. What followed were months of torture, disease, and despair. Only Jogues's zealous catholic belief would remain untainted, a belief marked by manicheisms between good and evil and that fervently appears in his recollection of the first days of his capture:

> So there we were, on the way to be led into a country truly foreign. Our Lord favored us with his Cross. It is true that, during thirteen days that we spent on that journey, I suffered in the body torments almost unendurable, and, in the soul, mortal anguish; hunger, the fiercely burning heat, the threats and hatred of those Leopards, the pain of our wounds–which, for not being dressed, became putrid even to the extent of breeding worms–caused us, in truth, much distress. But all these things seemed light to me in comparison with an inward sadness which I felt at the sight of our earliest and most ardent Christians of the Hurons. I had thought that they were to be the pillars of that rising Church, and I saw them become the victims of death. The ways closed for a long time to the salvation of so many peoples, who perish every day for want of being succored, made me die every hour, in the depth of my soul. It is a very hard thing, or rather very cruel, to see the triumph of the Demons over whole nations redeemed with so much love and paid for in the money of a blood so adorable. (11)

Jogues's narrative is significant not only because of how it relates to Protestant conception of the wilderness, but because of how it differs from it as well. Both Catholicism and Protestantism portray Indians as creatures of the evil wilderness, and as such they are described in animalistic terms. Jogues's designation of the Mohawk as "Leopards" filled with "hatred" is similar to William Bradford's characterization of Indians as "cruel," "barbarous," and "most furious in their rage and merciless where they overcome" (161). Both include in their writing the extent to which the "heathens"

gained pleasure through their horrific methods. “They burned one of my fingers and crushed another with their teeth,” recalled Jogues, “and those which were already torn they squeezed and twisted with the rage of Demons; they scratched my wounds with their nails; and when strength failed me, they applied fire to my arms and thighs” (12). In a similar line (though lacking a firsthand experience in the matter), Bradford writes that “[the savage people] delight to torment men in the most bloody manner that may be; flaying some alive with the shells of fishes, cutting off the members and joints of others by piecemeal and broiling on the coals, eat the collops of their flesh in their sight whilst they live (161).

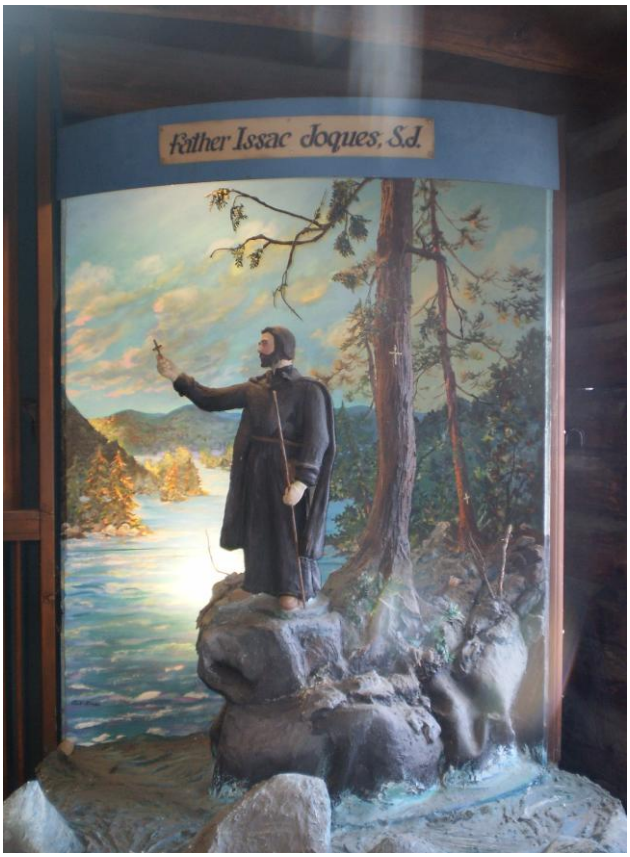



*Figure commemorating Father Isaac Jogues. Fort William Henry.*

For Bradford and Jogues, Indians represented an incarnation of all the evil and suffering that the wilderness connoted. But how that wilderness was to be overcome was a matter in which the Pilgrims and the Jesuits differed. In the same way that God had expelled Adam and Eve from Eden, he could equally reward his flock by turning the wilderness around them into a garden:

> I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. I will put in the desert the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive. I will set pines in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together. (Isaiah, 41:18-19)

A blessed state of happiness could be reached once the barren land had become an agricultural paradise. For both groups the wilderness was free from the corruption and

vices of Europe, but not free from the Devil. Yet while the Pilgrims and the Puritans focused on creating their utopia through active harvesting and development of farmlands, the Jesuits focused on stripping the Huron from their diabolical attributes. Jesuits, after all, were obliged to spread Roman Catholicism far and wide. Thus for Pilgrims and Puritans, the wilderness was to be overcome from without, that is, the individual was required to lead a model Christian life within the domesticated landscape that defined the utopian community and that represented their triumphing sanctuary. Jesuits, on the other hand, overcame the wilderness from within through the conversion of the Devil's agents. Defeating the wilderness would weaken Satan's dominion, a cursed land which resulted in the degeneracy of men into wild, depraved creatures. Melanie Perreault describes the difficulties in keeping the sacred scripts intact:

> As Christians, they agreed that all humans had to have originated from Adam and Eve, but what could explain the undeniable different skin tones and physical appearance of various Europeans, Africans, and Indians? . . . Europeans turned to the most logical explanation that would not challenge biblical authority: while all humans lived together in the remote past, as time progressed they moved away from each other and began to degenerate and take on the characteristics of their new lands. People living in a wilderness, then, would be wilder than those living in domesticated environments . . . The physical and cultural differences between peoples were a result of environmental influences rather than the much more dangerous suggestion of polygenesis. (21)

The Jesuit missionary had to redeem the souls of the Huron to procure a catholic environment for future generations to follow as much as to ensure his own salvation. Sanctity was a destiny fulfilled for the Jesuit, which explains the order's fixation upon martyrs (versus the Puritan's preoccupation with stories of exodus). It is no wonder that Jogues claims the suffering for the dead souls of the converted Huron to be superior to the pain caused by the wounds and putrefaction of his own body. In another passage he adds that "I would rather have suffered all sorts of torments than abandon to death those whom I could somewhat console and upon whom I could confer the blood of my Savior through the Sacraments of his Church" (13). The "pillars of that rising Church" were lost, but at least one of the Jesuit objectives remains untainted: that of spiritual self-growth through physical agony. Through the analogy of the crucifixion, Jogues celebrates the possibility of the ultimate sacrifice to come:

> I had always thought, indeed, that the day on which the whole Church rejoices in the glory of the blessed Virgin–her glorious and triumphant Assumption–would be for us a day of pain. This made me render thanks to my Savior Jesus Christ, because, on that day of gladness and joy, he was making us share his sufferings and admitting us to participation in his crosses. (13)

Jogues's sense of martyrdom never weakened throughout the months of his capture. To every practice he considered the craft of the Devil, he responded with prayer. He recalls counteracting Mohawk rituals of deer hunting through veneration of the Lord high upon a hill. Appalled by the Indians' gratitude for the deer to their "Demon," Aireskoi, Jogues turns to the mountain:

> Having heard this ceremony, I was horrified, and I was always careful to abstain from this flesh offered to the Demon . . . They would no longer hear me speak of God, or answer me the questions that I put to them about the language, wherewith they saw that I was attacking their superstitions. I therefore went every morning *de medio Babilonis*-that is, from a cabin where the Demon and the dreams were almost always adored –and escaped to a neighboring hill, where, in a large tree, I had made a great Cross; and

> there, now meditating, now reading, I conversed with my God, whom I alone in those vast wilds adored. The Barbarians did not perceive this until somewhat later, when they found me kneeling, as usual, before that Cross, which they hated, and said that it was hated by the Dutch; they began, on this account, to treat me worse than before – without, however, being able to hinder me from continuing elsewhere my prayers. (14-15)

It is no coincidence that Jogues makes the hill his place for worship. Numerous biblical references allude to natural peaks in the form of hills or mountains which reached out to the proximities of Heaven to be blessed by the divine light and become a pillar in the Church of God: in the land of Moriah, Abraham was to sacrifice his son "as a burnt offering on one of the mountains" (Genesis, 22:2), Moses had received "the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God" in Mount Sinai (Exodus, 31:18), Canaan was a land of "mountains and valleys" (Deuteronomy, 11:11), and the Israelites had "prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts" (Judges, 6:2). But more importantly, the Church of God was represented as the most powerful of all the mountains: "In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it" (Isaiah, 2:2). The hill upon which Jogues speaks to God is not deemed by the Jesuit as a wild entity. Wilderness surrounds him, but the cross that he has carved institutionalizes the ground on which the tree is rooted as a temple for the idolatry of the Lord. Catholic hierarchies remain present in every step of Jogues's martyrdom. He separates the wilderness of the Mohawk from the sanctity of a hilltop through the symbol of the cross, therefore ideologically dividing the Adirondack landscape. As Mark Stoll asserts, "[Catholic] believers sought salvation and knowledge of God in the Church, not alone in the woods" (42).

Ultimately, Jogues came to believe that he had the divine quest of converting the Mohawk in his hands. This did not prevent him from escaping, nonetheless. While accompanying a group of his captors on a fur trading excursion to Albany he managed to hide from the Mohawk until a group of Dutchmen paid his ransom. He boarded a vessel to Manhattan, and from there sailed back to his home country in December of 1643. His return to France was short, and in 1646 he set out on another journey to the Lake Champlain area in the hopes of ameliorating the strains between the French and the Haudenosaunee. Jogues was again taken prisoner by the Mohawk in Ossernon (now Auriesville, New York) and this time "was unceremoniously killed with a hatchet" (Schneider, 29). Jogues became one of the eight French Roman Catholic missionaries to perish in the hands of Indians in the seventeenth century, and in 1930 he was canonized along with his seven Jesuit brothers as a tribute to their martyrdom.

Jogues's narrative is illustrative of the religious fervor that distorted and determined Europeans' conception of the American wilderness. Far from regarding it as a clean slate, Christians brought along their ideological constructs of the wild in their voyage to the new world. The catholic zealousness that guided Jogues in his quest both parallels and contrasts Puritan descriptions of the wilderness. History would in time again reclaim the Adirondacks as an untameable region (in terms of farming and settlements) even after the so-called end of the frontier in 1890. Whether the tribulations of those who lived or visited the region were based on religion, economy, or on matters of survival, Father Jogues's testimony endures as an original touchstone and an anticipation of the challenges that man would encounter in the Adirondacks.

## 4.2.- In Search of the Over-Soul in the Adirondacks: Emerson, Stillman, and Transcendentalist Philosophy

The American Revolution had required great patriotic trust, but once independence was gained a new facet of nationalistic restlessness lingered among artists and intellectuals. Once arms were put down there permeated the need to characterize and define what it was that made America culturally and historically unique. Behind economic motives, what was it, after all, that had so insatiably nurtured such a powerful sense of loyalty to the colonies? Cultural sensibility required the development of a solid theory to describe and justify the aesthetic, political, and spiritual dimensions of the sentiment of freedom that had lead peasants to become warriors. The fact that America was deficient of a historical antiquity, myths, national heroes and the gloriousness of European artistry initially caused a sense of pessimism and disillusionment among intellectuals, who glanced upon the unpopulated vastness of the savage wilderness territories in contempt. As Enlightenment and subsequent romantic ideas stretched beyond the European continent, however, American writers and artists came to understand that it was that very wilderness which was to become their medium for the theory and the practice of freedom, and would be their legacy to the progress of civilization.

For the sake of simplification, the complexities of nineteenth-century American mentality are distributed throughout several items in this case study. This item focuses on the transcendentalist perspective on the Adirondacks especially through a close reading of Emerson's poem "The Adirondacs." Although published much later than other representative nineteenth-century Adirondack pieces, a first encounter with transcendentalism will allow the reader to gain perspective on the continuities and ruptures between the religious fervor commented in item 4.1. and the spirituality inherent of the American Renaissance. Items 4.3. and 4.4. will focus on nationalistic identity through the ideals of masculinity and sportsmanship and through the creation of regional myths and archetypes of the Adirondacks. The reader should keep in mind, however, that items 4.2., 4.3., and 4.4. are intrinsically interconnected and that they all answer to the definitive romanticist sentiment of the time in which nature and the wilderness are sought and studied with the dutiful purpose of discovering the truth of American nationalism as much as the truth of the state of man in an era of progress.

In August 1858, American painter, photographer, and journalist William James Stillman (1828-1901) got together a party of ten men (and eight guides) in an Adirondack camping trip. Stillman had developed considerable woodsmanship expertise in previous trips to the Adirondacks, but it was the first time that Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was to visit the region. The party, known as the Adirondack Club, also included other notable figures such as James Russell Lowell and the celebrated scientist Louis Agassiz, as well other leading figures of the Boston and Concord societies. Stillman selected Follensby Pond as the site, and during the weeks that followed the men immersed themselves in sporting activities–from paddling to deer hunting–often in an attempt to satisfy, or at least instigate their respective scientific curiosities, aesthetic interests, or metaphysical preoccupations.

Accounts of the events that unfolded during the excursion were commemorated in Stillman's journals and in Emerson's long poetic piece, "The Adirondacs: A Journal Dedicated to My Fellow-Travellers in August, 1858." The latter stands as an indispensable example of the transcendentalist legacy, a revelation of Emerson's unique

philosophy reaching from regional portrayals of the geology and the peoples of the Adirondacks to the wider, national scientific revolution that the nation was going through. Fascinated by the scholar, Stillman recreates in his journal the double qualities of his object of interest –Emerson the man, and Emerson the philosopher. Although Stillman was more notably influenced by the English art critic John Ruskin, his writing and painting were complemented by Emerson's theories as well. As we will see, Stillman's and Emerson's understanding of nature in transcendentalist terms has direct consequences in the way the Adirondack wilderness is perceived and constructed in their writing. In order to understand the content of the text, a brief summary of the emergence of transcendentalism will be helpful.

Eighteenth-century colonialism and revolutionary scientific thought inevitably shifted western man's faith in God and biblical prescriptions. The influence of Newton and Locke in America opened the door for a more secular and materialistic appreciation of the universe and human nature, thus attenuating the religious fervor characteristic of the previous decades. The key concept was now reason, not faith, causing people to question biblical dogmas. The church was now often viewed as an institution that limited men's possibilities and writers now used scientific and philosophical perspectives–rather than religious–to support their theories. This is not to say, however, that America was becoming atheistic, but rather, that intellectuals were searching for other, more empiric sources from which to study and understand God and his divine creation. Newton's concept of the "clockmaker" was based on the idea that God is responsible for the harmony of the universe, and that therefore man should study his work in order to reach Him. In a similar note, Kant would claim that the laws that maintain the harmony of the universe can be deciphered by man. This deistic appreciation of the world–versus the exegesis of the Bible–brought the concept of nature to the front line of scholars' interests, anticipating transcendentalism. Adding to deism, Rousseau's doctrines established primitivism as yet another pretext for the close study of nature. In his works *Emile* (1762) and *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloise* (1761) he proclaimed that society corrupted the morality of man, who was innately good, and that therefore the practice of a "primitive" lifestyle could sway the individual away from spiritual degradation.

These philosophical and scientific breakthroughs impregnated the America of the nineteenth century, and were essential for the emergence of transcendentalism. Transcendentalism is more accurately viewed from the perspective of a pragmatic philosophy, rather than a religion. It did not adhere to a biblical belief in God, but placed nature at the center of the doctrine. Neither did it adhere to a clear belief in the afterlife; instead, transcendentalists established nature's capacity for renewal as a demonstration of the cyclical–versus linear–meaning of life. The structure of the universe was believed to duplicate the structure of the individual self and vice versa, and therefore man had to dedicate himself considerably to self-knowledge, so as to comprehend nature all the better. God was a refuge, and if nature was God's most discernible work (through scientific study), then nature provided refuge as well. Nature as a benign entity deeply contrasted previous puritan conceptions:

> The Transcendentalist conception of man added indirectly to the attractiveness of wilderness. Instead of the residue of evil in every heart, which Calvinism postulated, Emerson, Thoreau, and their colleagues discerned a spark of divinity. Under the prod of Calvin, Puritans feared the innate sinfulness of human nature would run rampant if left to itself in the moral vacuum of wilderness. Men might degenerate to beasts or

> worse on stepping into the woods. Transcendentalists, on the contrary, saw no such danger in wild country because they believed in man's basic goodness. Reversing Puritan assumptions, they argued that one's chances of attaining moral perfection and knowing God were *maximized* by entering wilderness. (Nash, 86)

Nonetheless, transcendentalism did not abandon Puritanism altogether. The puritan concept of "grace" was recuperated by Emerson and Thoreau to claim the existence of the individual's "inner light" (the designation was adopted from Quaker terminology) to communicate with nature. This inner light, which can be understood as a form of intuition, provided the individual with the means to "trans-" (go through) "-cend" (go up) beyond tangible reality. Echoing Plato, Emerson distinguished in *Nature* (1836) between Soul/Idea and Nature/Matter. Matter is an imperfect, tangible reflection of the Soul and is accessible to all men through the senses and reason. It includes "both nature and art, all other men and my own body" (36), that is, everything that is NOT ME. Rationalism could indeed provide insight to the mechanics of the physical world of Matter. Meanwhile, in the solitude of nature and through the inner light and intuition, man could more easily access the Over-Soul, a universal soul that connects all entities pertaining to the physical and the essential and of which the individual is an intrinsic part. Respective approaches to Matter and Soul were understood to be complementary.

Although more than twenty years spanned between the publication of *Nature* and "The Adirondacs," many of the key concepts with which Emerson shocked the nation and the religious community in his earlier work remain intact in the poem. Throughout twenty stanzas, Emerson relates the party's trip as a pretext to set loose transcendentalist reflections.

In the first part, the narrator describes the trip itself: from mapping the journey to describing traditional Adirondack camping practices. The state of affairs is replete with romanticist ideals: a group of men, guided by expert woodsmen, making their way into the wilderness of nature through "primitive" means of rowing. Acknowledgement of specific geographical locations is abundant in the first part of the poem: Emerson refers to the mountains Taháwus, Seaward, MacIntyre, and Baldhead as "Titans" (149) and makes allusions to bodies of water such as Saranac, Round Lake, and Père Raquette Stream to guide the reader in their route –an attempt which, as Philip Terrie points out, was erroneous, since the direction in which the party rowed must have been southward, not northbound, as Emerson claimed (1985:47). Once the campsite has been reached, the men start making use of their "survival" skills:

> A pause and council: then, where near the head
> On the east a bay makes inward to the land
> Between two rocky arms, we climb the bank,
> And in the twilight of the forest noon
> Wield the first axe these echoes ever heard.
> We cut young trees to make our poles and thwarts,
> Barked the white spruce to weatherfend the roof,
> Then struck a light, and kindled the camp-fire. (150)

Other examples of self-reliance in nature are repeated throughout the poem. Emerson's understanding of self-reliance attests to the transcendentalists' focus on individualism and self-realization, causing a rupture with Calvinistic notions of predestination. The "I," compounded by Matter and Soul, must concentrate on the here and the now; that is, attempt transcendence whilst remaining in this lifetime. Since transcendentalists did not

adhere to a belief in an afterlife, neither did they believe that what the individual does in this life will have consequences in the next. In their view, since nature was cyclical and man was part of nature, so does man renew himself into some natural form. Thus, the individual's happiness and virtue depended upon his own self-realization, and self-realization was reached through self-reliance, especially when it was practiced in nature. It is this divestment into primitive ways which can lead man to unite Matter and Soul, which civilization had throughout history wrongfully separated. Not surprisingly, Emerson gives a poetic voice to the Adirondack forests: 'Welcome!' the wood god murmured through the leaves,- / 'Welcome, though late, unknowing, yet known to me' (150). Although man has alienated the physical from his soul, nature's wisdom has never been corrupted, and thus recognizes man as a part of itself just as much as it is a part of him. Emerson celebrates this union between man and nature:

> So fast will Nature acclimate her sons,
> Though late returning to her pristine ways . . .
> We were made freemen of the forest laws,
> All dressed, like Nature, fit for her own ends,
> Essaying nothing she cannot perform. (150-151)

Later in the poem he claims that each of the men develop a unique relationship to nature based on a quasi-mystical experience through which, Emerson assumes, man cathartically comes to terms with his own place in nature, waking "a new sense":

> Judge with what sweet surprises Nature spoke
> To each apart, lifting her lovely shows
> To spiritual lessons pointed home . . .
> Some mystic hint accosts the vigilant
> Not clearly voiced, but waking a new sense
> Inviting to new knowledge, one with old. (154)

The scholars who have entered into the wilderness revert to primitive ways: they lie on hemlock boughs "like Sacs and Sioux" (150), they "sleep on the fragrant brush" (150), forget about their worries and duties back at home as much as about their societal mannerisms. Nature "made them to boys again" (150), this being the Rousseaunian symbolic idea of a moral tabula rasa. But it is in the Adirondack guide in which Emerson genuinely recognizes the return to the primitive:

> At morn or noon, the guide rows bareheaded:
> Shoes, flannel shirt, and kersey trousers make
> His brief toilette: at night, or in the rain,
> He dons a surcoat which he doffs at morn:
> A paddle in the right hand, or an oar,
> And in the left, a gun, his needful arms.
> By turns we praised the stature of our guides,
> Their rival strength and suppleness, their skill
> To row, to swim, to shoot, to build a camp,
> To climb a lofty stem, clean without boughs
> Full fifty feet, and bring the eaglet down:
> Temper to face wolf, bear, or catamount,
> And wit to trap or take him in his lair.
> Sound, ruddy men, frolic and innocent,
> In winter, lumberers; in summer, guides;
> Their sinewy arms pull at the oar untired
> Three times ten thousand strokes, from morn to eve. (151)

Later in this case study we will view the figure of the Adirondack guide more closely, but for now it is suffice to say that for Emerson, the guide resembles an archetype more than an actual man. The key concept here is the notion of innocence, a direct effect of primitivism: the guide renders the uselessness of societal ways as obvious, representing instead a lifestyle in which self-reliance and self-realization are the pragmatic necessities.

In more skeptical terms, William James Stillman would describe his fascination with an Adirondack woodsman in his 1854 journey. Stillman is intrigued by the man who was once like himself, a man of society who became asphyxiated by civilization, but who, unlike Stillman, made the woods his permanent settlement. Stillman's observations on the effects of the wilderness over human nature reflect American mentality's shift from puritan to romanticist views. If Puritans had feared the wilderness because of its potential threat to degenerate the individual morally, Romanticism and transcendentalism, as I have already argued, contemplated the retreat to nature and to primitive forms as the regression whereupon Soul and Matter could be reunited. Notice that although Stillman claims that many men he has come across were "bestialized" by the wilderness, the process through which the woodsman goes through results in a lifestyle apparently undamaged by the environment, with which the man has learned to live in harmony:

> I saw one day a hunter who had come into the woods with a motive in some degree like mine –impatience of the restraints and burdens of civilization and pure love of solitude. He had become, not bestializes like most of the men I saw, but animalized –he had drifted back into the condition of his dog, with his higher intellect inert. He had built himself a cabin in the depth of the woods, and there he lived in the most complete isolation from human society he could attain . . . He cared nothing for books, but enjoyed nature and only hunted in order to live, respecting the lives of his fellow-creatures within that limit. He only went to the settlements when he needed supplies, abstained from alcoholic drinks, the great enemy of the backwoodsman, and was happy in his solitude.... ("Illusion," 161)

But Stillman is wary of the consequences that absolute isolation from society can have over the individual. Unlike Thoreau, Stillman is suspicious of what hermit ways can lead to. True, the woodsman seems to live content and in peace, but this is achieved at the expense of developing an apathetic intellect. Moreover, when recalling the farmer in whose cabin Stillman lived, he suggests that the "virtue" of isolation in nature can often lead to an excess of vice. But in an interesting turn of affairs, it is in society where this vice is evidenced, not in the wilderness, like Puritans believed:

> The backwoods life, as a rule, I found led to hard drinking, and even the old settler with whom I had taken quarters, though an excellent and affectionate head of his family and in his ordinary life temperate and hard-working, used at long intervals to break bounds and, taking his savings down to the settlement, drink till he could neither pay for more not "get it on trust," and then come home penitent and humiliated. (161-162)

In spite of his ambivalence towards extensive periods of time in nature, Stillman, like Emerson, did perceive that during the 1858 excursion of only a few weeks of duration the men were gradually stripped from the civil forms of society, drifting into the more truthful essences of the self: "disguises were soon dropped, and one saw the real characters of his comrades as it was impossible to see them in society. Conventions

faded out, and for good or for ill the man stood naked before the questioning eye –pure personality" ("Philosophers'," 65).

Emerson and Stillman both recount the experience of jack-hunting. This traditional Adirondack form of deer hunting involved approaching the deer in the night time, when the animal comes to the shore to graze and drink at ease. The hunter, quietly paddling his boat towards his prey, carries a light strong enough to mesmerize and blind the deer, which unaware of the approaching danger, stands mildly alert, staring at the light. The hunter succeeds in getting quite close to his prey, from where he can usually get a straight and easy aim at the target. Jack-hunting was a just one of the alternatives that guides provided their clients with for successful hunting expeditions. Hounding deer was another fruitful method: hound dogs were set off into the woods to chase the animals down to the lakeshore. Terrified, the deer would swim away from its predators as a last resort. The huntsmen, awaiting in their boats, would paddle as close as possible to the swimming deer, from where they could once again shoot without much difficulty. These methods materialize the factual distance between the romantic ideal of masculine sportsmanship and the actual extent of the sportsmen's abilities:

> The assistance of jacklight or dogs that most Adirondack hunters required to bag a deer testifies to their incompetence in the woods and their willingness to employ whatever technological or other leverage they could dream up in order to exercise their "gentleman's right" to exploit the wilderness. (Terrie, 1985: 48)

Both practices had devastating results on the Adirondack deer population: hundreds of specimens were abandoned on the shores or left in the waters to waste, and does and fawns were sacrificed in the massive hounding chases as much as stags, thus threatening the survival of the species. By the time that Stillman wrote in his journal about the "Philosophers' Camp" hounding and jacklighting, ruled as un-sportive and a hazard to the Adirondack fauna, had been prohibited. Emerson recalls the jacklight-hunting experience as follows:

> Or, later yet, beneath a lighted jack,
> In the boat's bows, a silent night-hunter
> Stealing with paddle to the feeding-grounds
> Of the red deer, to aim at a square mist.
> Hark to that muffled roar! a tree in the woods
> Is fallen: but hush! It has not scared the buck
> Who stands astonished at the meteor light,
> Then turns to bound away, –is it too late? (152)

Emerson omits from the poem his own attitude towards jack-hunting, but this is not lost on Stillman, who narrates the hunting anecdote as a pretext to analyze Emerson the philosopher. Indeed, Stillman admits several times that his greatest interest in the trip was to study Emerson, "the great student" who always seemed to be "a living question" ("Philosophers'," 64). While Stillman did procure to spend time alone in the woods with him to watch him mediate, his reflections on Emerson's feelings about hunting reflect an inquiring mind about the scholar's position as to the actual practice of skills involving self-reliance. It appears that Stillman was surprised when he found out that Emerson displayed no interest in hunting: "His insatiability in the study of human nature was shown curiously . . . He had the utmost tenderness of animal life and had no sympathy with sport in any form –he 'named the birds without a gun.'" But, as he goes

on to say, Emerson also fell under the spell of camp life and the implications of actually living in the wilderness:

> And when the routine of camp life brought the day of the hunt, the eagerness of the hunters and the passion of the chase, the strong return to our heredity of human primeval occupation gradually involved him and made him desire to enter into this experience as well as the rest of the forest emotions. He must understand this passion to kill . . . He said to me later, and emphatically, "I must kill a deer"; and one night we went out "jack-hunting" to enable him to realize that ambition. ("Philosophers'," 65)

Ultimately, Emerson proved to be incompetent in the matter, in spite of jacklighting facilitations. Since Emerson was unable to see the deer, it was Stillman, in the end, who fired the shot. But what is of interest, is that in spite of Emerson's change of heart regarding hunting, as described in the previous quote, Stillman is convinced that it would not take long for the scholar to revert to his former opinions: "We had no other opportunity for the jack-hunt," Stillman writes, "and so Emerson went home unsatisfied in this ambition –glad, no doubt, when he recalled the incident, that he had failed" (65). Stillman might be suggesting that once away again from nature, from the actual wilderness–and not the Concord backwoods to which Emerson was accustomed–the call of primitivism weakens to the point that man once again makes reason his medium for judgement.

Another anecdote which Emerson and Stillman commemorate is the scientific research carried out by Louis Agassiz and Jeffreis Wyman. While some of the men took time for leisure and Emerson for meditation, the two scientists immersed themselves in the study of biology, botany, and physiology. In Stillman's emblematic painting, *The Philosophers' Camp* (1858), Agassiz and Jeffreis appear dissecting a fish on a tree stump, while Emerson stands at the center of the canvas. It is significant that Stillman places Emerson in this position, between the group of huntsmen and the naturalists. As I have stated earlier, Emerson was Stillman's prime object of study, and the philosopher's interest in all the possibilities through which to understand nature (hence Emerson's sudden rush for hunting, as explained above) was not lost on the painter. Regarding the naturalists, Emerson describes his friends' activity as follows:

> Two Doctors in the camp
> Dissected the slain deer, weighed the trout's brain,
> Captured the lizard, salamander, shrew,
> Crab, mice, snail, dragon-fly, minnow, and moth;
> Insatiate skill in water or in air
> Waved the scoop-net, and nothing came amiss;
> The while, one leaden pot of alcohol
> Gave an impartial tomb to all the kinds.
> Not less the ambitious botanist sought plants,
> Orchis and gentian, fern, and long whip-scirpus
> Rosy polygonum, lake-margin's pride,
> Hypnum and hydnum, mushroom, sponge, and moss,
> Or harebell nodding in the gorge of falls. (152-153)

*The Philosophers' Camp* (1858) by William James Stillman. Courtesy, Concord Free Public Library (See Acknowledgements).

Newton and Kant's deism had created a pathway for new approaches to God through the study of natural laws. Similarly, Emerson believed that by way of the study and classification of nature in the world of Matter man could advance toward the comprehension of the Soul. Before he began writing *Nature*, Emerson travelled to Europe, where he acquainted some of the great romantic English poets, including Samuel Coleridge, and Antoine Laurent de Jussieu, the French botanist and former professor at the Jardin des Plantes. Emerson met him in 1833. More than forty years had passed since Jussieu had refined the science of botany in *Genera Plantarum* (1789), in which he proposed a new method for the taxonomy of plants, one which deeply improved the system of Linnaeus. The idea that plants–and by extension, other natural entities–could be classified according to certain characteristics (the Linnaeus system had developed a hierarchy according to species, genera, orders, classes, and lastly, kingdoms) was impressive, but what really captivated Emerson were the implications beyond mere knowledge of the material world. The notion of an organic unity between material, natural entities and the idea that the world could be ordered on the basis of science inspired Emerson to believe that through the knowledge of order, man can come to terms with the laws that govern the Soul. After all, Matter was an imperfect reflection of essences, but still a reflection.

It is no wonder, therefore, that aside from the reference made to Agassiz and Wyman, a few other inventories of natural specimens are made by Emerson throughout the poem. From his list of "centennial trees" according to physical features and botanical taxonomy:

> Oak, cedar, maple, poplar, beech and fir,
> Linden and spruce. In strict society
> Three conifers, white, pitch, and Norway pine,

> Five-leaved, three-leaved, and two-leaved, grew thereby.
> Our patron pine was fifteen feet in girth,
> The maple eight, beneath its shapely tower. (150)

to an ornithological catalog of the Adirondacks:

> Above, the eagle flew, the osprey screamed,
> The raven croaked, owls hooted, the woodpecker
> Loud hammered, and the heron rose in the swamp . . .
> So Nature shed all beauty lavishly
> From her redundant horn. (153)

This cornucopia of specimens, each of which is unique in its own way and yet part of a system and process, reflects how all of nature is interconnected, representing an all-pervasive order of laws that can be deciphered by man. Moreover, not only is nature an organic unity, of which man is part, but it is a unity which is eternally repeated through cycles, forever redundant. Stillman echoes Emerson's cosmogony, though he was not a transcendentalist per se. For example, in another piece from his journal he recalls that in his earlier years as a painter he had sought the woods "to find new subjects for art, spiritual freedom, and a closer contact with the spiritual world –something beyond the material existence" ("Illusion" 160). (Stillman may be echoing Emerson just as much as Ruskin with these words, however.) In any case, his aesthetic sensibility was nurtured by his interest in natural history, and during the Adirondack Club trip he absorbed knowledge as much as he could from Agassiz:

> For Agassiz, I had the feeling which all who came under the magic of his colossal individuality . . . his wide science gave us continual lectures on all the elements of nature –no plant, no insect, no quadruped hiding its secret from him. The lessons he taught us of the leaves of the pine, and of the vicissitudes of the Laurentine Range, in one of whose hollows we lay; the way he drew new facts from the lake, and knew them when he saw them . . . the daily dissection of the fish, the deer, the mice . . . were studied in which we were his assistants and pupils. (Quoted in Novak, 57)

In a last thematic section, Emerson raises the issue of social progress, a subject which critics have often found to be contradictory in his writing. In the words of Mildred Silver, "in spite of the fact that in his early manhood Emerson had made the direct denial of human progress . . . he showed in his journals that he did not consider the matter closed" (4). Indeed, the father of transcendentalism would, for the remainder of his life, examine and ponder upon the issue in his writing. Since nature can be conceived through epitomes that answer to the repetition of cycles, the progress of humanity, as a whole, was an arguable matter. While individual progress was an acceptable idea–transcendence of the individual was compatible with the notion of cycles–social progress displayed a complexity that would always prove difficult for Emerson to decipher. His mixed feelings are evident in the poem when he recalls the celebrated moment in which the party, while rowing to Tupper Lake, received the news that the first transatlantic cable had been laid. All the men, including Emerson, rejoice at the announcement:

> . . . Loud, exulting cries
> From boat to boat, and to the echoes round,
> Greet the glad miracle. Thought's new-found path
> Shall supplement henceforth all trodden ways,
> Match God's equator with a zone of art,

> And lift man's public action to a height
> Worthy the enormous cloud of witnesses,
> When linked hemispheres attest his deed . . .
> A burst of joy, as if we told the fact
> To ears intelligent; as if gray rock
> And cedar grove and cliff and lake should know
> This fear of wit, this triumph of mankind. (155-156)

If earlier Emerson had exalted the men's return to simpler, more primitive habits, and he had acknowledged nature as the wiser entity who embraces her lost wanderers, in this passage he is intent to let the rock, the grove, cliff, and lake know that it in end, the power that man has to subdue nature constitutes the ultimate victory. The domination of nature was the effect that science, technology, and reason had brought to the modern world. It represented the final consequence of the Enlightenment mentality of eighteenth-century Europe, against which Romanticism reacted, but like Emerson, embraced as well. Following his initial response to the news, however, Emerson seems to check himself:

> And yet I marked, even in the manly joy . . .
> (Perchance I erred) A shade of discontent;
> Or was it for mankind a generous shame,
> As of a luck not quite legitimate,
> Since fortune snatched from wit the lion's part? . . .
> . . . a hungry company
> Of traders, led by corporate sons of trade,
> Perversely borrowing from the shop the tools
> Of science, not from philosophers,
> Had won the brightest laurel of all time . . .
> It was from Jove that [Prometheus] stole his fire,
> And, without Jove, the good had never been. (156)

Notice that it is not man's powerful command over nature that Emerson laments, but the fact that "corporate sons of trade" had put their faith in science, not in philosophy. Because of this, civilization once more reinstates Matter as its prime focus, breaching the split between Matter and Soul even further apart. In the same way that Emerson had been fascinated by Jussieu's natural method because of its potential to decipher the world of essences, the Soul, so does he desire in the poem to avoid the materialism to which civilization is always drawn. Understanding Matter is beneficial to humankind because it can provide insight to the Idea; that is the ultimate objective that science should have. As Emerson had claimed decades ago in *Nature*, "all science has one aim, namely, to find a theory of nature. We have theories of races and functions, but scarcely yet a remote approach to the idea of creation" (36). It is in this step beyond the possibilities of science where the philosopher's role becomes essential, for there are limits to the laws of Matter that only philosophy can transcend. Silver is right when she claims that the Emersonian view stipulates that "an advance of knowledge is meaningless unless the right kind of individual uses the knowledge" (7). This mode of thinking was characteristic of Emerson. According to Bradley P. Dean, "Emerson was greatly enamored of the world of spirit and was intellectually predisposed to begin with truth and work toward the significance of facts" (81). In this manner, Emerson ontologically defines science starting from the consideration of the Soul, which is to remain a constant in every step that civilization takes.

This is not to say, nonetheless, that Emerson is retracting from his initial reaction. The fact that science has triumphed at the expense of philosophy is a small price to pay. In the end, Emerson the utilitarian is as present as Emerson the romanticist. Terrie alludes to Emerson's sense of materialism as a man of his time: "[the news of the cable] confirmed the need to employ art, science, or whatever mediation was effective in eliminating those features of nature which seemed menacing or irrelevant to a progressive age" (1985: 63). The implications of such a view are certainly precarious: is the father of transcendentalism really suggesting that nature, understood here as a part of Matter, could be *improved* through human will? It certainly appears as such. Reconciling these opposite positions proved to be an arduous task, and Emerson strove to come to terms with himself by treating them as conciliatory perspectives. Yet although it is hard to conceive them as complementary, the fact remains that both positions coexisted in nineteenth-century America, and that Emerson was certainly not the only one dealing with this ambivalence, though he might have been one of the most articulate about it. In the poem, he throws this ambivalence to the frontline of the argument; notice, however, that this is not done with the intention to present the obviousness of the irony, but to reinstate the utilitarian side of his own thoughts. In this manner, Emerson once again attempts to present his ambivalence as conciliatory:

> We praise the guide, we praise the forest life;
> But will we sacrifice our dear-bought lore
> Of books and arts and trained experiment,
> Or count the Sioux a match for Agassiz?
> O no, not we! (157)

Inside the wider romanticist context that defined nineteenth-century western thought, transcendentalism provided a new approach to the idea of wilderness. Deistic influences were crucial for the consideration of nature as an overall benign entity, thus breaking from puritan and catholic beliefs of nature as an evil entity. Yet transcendentalism, as we have seen, was not without its contradictions and Emerson was not without his reservations. In any case, Emerson and Stillman's relations of the Follensby Pond excursion have come a long way from the Adirondacks that Father Jogues had described, but their views are not ultimately all that different. For all of them, the Adirondacks were a testing ground under which they had to make use of the best of their resources in order to survive. The Adirondack Club's experience was certainly not as dramatic or as dangerous as Jogues's, but their insistence upon a regression to the primitive, and upon answering to the "necessity to kill" that Stillman claimed resulted from their understanding of the campsite as a testing ground for their bodies as much as for their spirits. Jogues, Emerson, and Stillman did not enter the Adirondacks without a previous idea of what the wilderness represented, and it was they who expanded on these ideas during their experiences there. Jogues's catholic convictions determined his perception of the woods as an evil place where the Devil roamed, and that is what he found: a hostile environment where agents of Satan (the Mohawk) tried to destroy his faith in God through months of torture. Emerson knew that in the solitude of nature he could escape from materialism and come to terms with his Soul by minimizing the distance between Idea and Matter, and that is what he found. For Emerson, the men participating in the excursion returned to nature as prodigal sons. In other words, their experiences in the Adirondacks only deepened both of the writers' respective earlier assumptions about the region. Catholicism and the pragmatics of transcendentalism allowed Jogues and Emerson, respectively, to successfully overcome their experiences in the sense that both of them felt somehow spiritually purified in the woods. The

possibility of martyrdom was a welcome alternative for Jogues in case he should succumb at the hands of the Iroquois. Escapism provided Emerson with time for meditation in the heart of nature, where the Soul can be more easily accessed, and the events that unfolded permitted him to once again reconsider and address the problematic of social progress.


*Transcendetalism left a mark in the Adirondacks, as it did in the entirety of American landscapes and culture. The picture above was taken at one of the trails at the Paul Smith Interpretative Center. Despite the fact that Thoreau did not visit the Adirondacks, his influence in the spirit of the Forest Preserve is unquestionable.*

### 4.3.- Romanticist Sportsmen and Nationalist Identity: Charles Fenno Hoffman and Joel T. Headley

Years before the Adirondack Club made its unforgettable excursion into the northern wilderness, two notable authors had contributed to the romanticist appreciation of upstate New York through their publications. Charles Fenno Hoffman (1806-1884) and Joel T. Headley (1813-1897) sought in the Adirondacks a scenery that answered to the romantic aesthetics established by Edmund Burke, and a survey of peoples of the frontier who redefined the role of man in the wilderness. Undoubtedly influenced by James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking character that roamed the Adirondacks in *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), which we will attend to in the following item, Hoffman and Headley found in the backswoodsman the mythical potential to perpetuate the notion of the frontier as the definitive trait of American identity. Together with Burke's division between beautiful and sublime landscapes, the proclamation of mythical archetypes was indispensable for the credibility of a distinguished

"Americaness" that could once and for all break from Eurocentric parameters of nationalistic identity. In this item we will focus on Hoffman's *Wild Scenes of the Forest and the Prairie, Volume I* (first published serially in 1837, and republished as a volume in 1839) and Headley's *The Adirondack; or, Life in the Woods* (1849). Both writers would subsequently publish more pieces on the Adirondacks –Hoffman wrote a number of poems on the subject in *The Vigil of Faith* (1842) and Headley re-edited his book several times, adding new material from other trips (the reprint we will be using answers to the 1853 edition). However, *Wild Scenes* and the first edition of *The Adirondack* were crucial pioneering works in the "discovery" of the Adirondacks. Both books reached widespread popularity, and placed the Adirondacks on the map as a man's escapist retreat for the practice of sport. Sporting activities, after all, also answered to romanticist precepts of vitality and intuition, and city dwellers found that hunting, fishing, and exploring reattached them to the masculine traits that had been eroded by social mannerisms and refinement.

As I stated throughout the previous item, the reader must bear in mind that transcendentalism was also part of the wider romanticist spirit revolutionizing western culture, and as such, many of the claims made throughout the analysis of Emerson and Stillman's pieces stylistically and thematically echo Hoffman and Headley's work. Concern with redefining American identity was not exclusive of travel writers and sportsmen; in the 1830s Emerson was also demanding an "original relation to the universe," one where "a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition" (*Nature*, 35) could aid man's sense of place and time in a country that bore little cultural and artistic grandeur. Unveiling the nature of the sublime and the beautiful was also a task that Emerson undertook, and the adequate terminology for the comprehension of aesthetics appears several times in *Nature* and in other essays. In the same way, and as we will shortly see, the deistic cosmogony upon which transcendentalism developed its theories was also embraced by these travelling sportsmen, especially by Headley.

In order to understand the significance of aesthetics for American nationalism we must first attend to the romanticist valuation of nature. If Rousseau claimed that primitivism was the opposite state of being to the social, corrupted individual (a premise which the English romantic poets fancied and explored in their writing) then nature provided the perfect environment in which to return to innocence and moral immaculateness. At the same time, moral improvement could be accomplished through the observation of God's most visible creations –mountains, rivers, valleys, forests, plants, animals, and the rest of the natural spectrum. European intellectuals, from scientists to artists and writers, were enthused by this "back to nature" sentiment, but their pride in the achievements of civilization was in no way diminished by it. From prestigious literary artefacts to architectural and painted relics–let us not forget that the topic of ruins was a favorite among English romantic poets–provided a cultural and historical grounding for each European nation. These national treasures were exalted and celebrated; they represented an object of collective cultural veneration. How could America compete with this sense of nationalism? True, the "land of freedom" was a land of nature, but that was not enough, for nature could also be found in the Alps, in the Highlands, in the Pyrenees, etc. Roderick Nash describes how Americans found the way to redefine the value of their native environment as follows:

> Such lack of confidence in nature as the grounds for nationalism stemmed in part from the realization of Americans that, after all, other countries had impressive birds, fruit, and flowers too . . . An attribute unique to nature in the New World had to be found.

> The search led to the wilderness. In the early nineteenth century American nationalists began to understand that it was in the *wildness* of its nature that their country was unmatched. While other nations might have an occasional wild peak or patch of heath, there was no equivalent of a wild continent. And if, as many suspected, wilderness was the medium through which God spoke most clearly, then America had a distinct moral advantage over Europe, where centuries of civilization had deposited a layer of artificiality over His works. (69)

Hoffman and Headley, among others, went after the *wildness* in the Adirondacks and articulated the splendor of "Americaness" along the way. Moreover, the emphasis that America had placed in the individual–derived in great part not only from transcendentalists, but also from the ideology spread by Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin–offered a new perspective from which to interpret the greatness of man. In the same way that European history was full of geniuses, "great men" who had created everlasting artistic pieces, or become great leaders, or had proved any other form of worthiness to stand the test of time, so did America have the pioneer. The pioneer plunged himself against the wilderness and through his skill and intuition, all of which stemmed from his attachment to primitiveness, was able to control it and subdue it. Profound exaltation of the frontiersman and the urge to proclaim national heroes, however, soon derived in the formation of the pioneer archetype, and in some ways the original sense of individuality which the pioneer represented was lost. The mythical power of Thomas Carlyle's great man theory–picked up by Emerson in *Representative Men* (1850)–could not sustain itself in the skin of a pioneer because it became a symbol of popular culture, rather than a character fit for intellectuals. In any case, there are attempts in the part of Hoffman and Headley to enhance the backwoodsman as an individual representative of one of all of humanity's sources of pride: the victorious struggle of a man against wilderness.

Behind the nationalistic preoccupation of American intellectuals laid an adjacent motive: aesthetic completion of nature through the study of the sublime and the beautiful. Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757)–which would be followed by Kant's *Analytic of the Sublime* (1790)–was acclaimed by romanticists as the "guidebook" for the classification of natural features. Burke had established two distinct categories, the sublime and the beautiful, in accordance to man's reaction at the moment the element is beheld. While the beholding of beauty aroused in the human mind a sense of tranquillity and harmony, and provided a continuation of traditional taste, the sublime seemed to awaken irrational passions in an instant. As Adam Phillips summarizes, for Burke, "the Sublime was a way of thinking about excess as the key to a new kind of subjectivity" while "Beauty . . . was something more reassuringly tempered" (ix). These categories were applicable to art just as much as to nature. The Enlightenment had superseded in returning to classical forms of beauty, where harmony and geometrical proportion, as a reaction to the excesses of the Baroque period, sparked a sense of delight and satisfaction in the beholder. The exquisite taste of architects such as Ange-Jaques Gabriel and James Stuart, painters such as Jacques Louis David and Anton Raphael Mengs and composers such as Mozart and Haydn had been clear evocations of beauty reminiscent of Greek and Roman artistic standards (the eighteenth century would be remembered as the neoclassic period –except in music, to which we always refer as classical). But as Romanticism began, more emphasis was being placed on imagination, which was ontologically closer to passion and to the senses than to traditional taste. Nature and the wilderness, the new objects of study that broke away from the harmony and proportions

of man-made gardens, required an aesthetic theory from which to be analyzed. It was precisely in nature where another reaction, different from the delight and the satisfaction experienced by the beholder, could be aroused more easily. Nature provided not only beautiful landscapes, but more importantly, sublime ones:

> The passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*, when those causes operate most powerfully, is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force. Astonishment . . . is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree. (Burke, 53)

Awe, terror, pain, and obscurity were part of the astonishment, the characteristic reaction to the sublime. This vertigo greatly contrasted with the pleasure the beholder felt before the smooth, refined traits of a beautiful landscape. While the view of a lake in a valley, or a doe calmly grazing with her fawn at her side, or any other image traditionally associated to pastoral nature may inspire a sense of the harmonic completion of beauty, a violent thunderstorm, a rapturous precipice or the skyward verticality of a certain mountain will invoke the sense of power and danger that constitute the sublime, for it is in peril when man feels the vulnerability of terror: "No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear," Burke wrote, "for fear is an apprehension of pain and death . . . Whatever therefore is terrible, with regard to sight, is sublime too" (53).

Accordingly, the Adirondacks that Hoffman and Headley describe are a wilderness where the sublime and the beautiful can be found. Sometimes the categories are projected in separate landscape views; other times, the same landscape transits from one category to the other, depending on the change of weather or the time of the day. In any case, it is important to keep in mind that both writers were intently using Burke's terminology so as to convey an idea of the wilderness that was unique to the American territory. Both writers developed a passion for travel writing that would not be limited to the Adirondacks. Hoffman, the son of a New York State Attorney General, tried his hand in several literary fields: from autobiographical sketches of his experiences in the frontier to writing poetry, fiction, and editing. His handicap (he had lost his right leg at the age of eleven) made him an unlikely candidate for periodically living in the frontier, but it did not seem to mar his spirit for adventure in the wilderness, and in 1837 he hired Ebenenezer Emmons's guide, John Cheney, to lead him up Mount Marcy. Although, in the end, the ascent proved to be too difficult for Hoffman, he nevertheless spent time in the Adirondack woods and published his experiences in the *New York Mirror*, where he was an editor. Headley would become the most acclaimed continuator of Hoffman's Adirondack pieces. The son of a Presbyterian clergyman, Headley turned as well to preaching. In addition to his calling, he wrote biographies and travel books, and is credited, along with Hoffman, as the quintessential Adirondack sportsman and author. Following his trips to Europe in the early 1840s, he journeyed to the Adirondacks for the first time in 1849 for health reasons, "to seek mental repose and physical strength in the woods" (Headley, i).

In *Wild Scenes*, Hoffman is aware of New Yorkers' lack of knowledge and familiarity with the Adirondack territory. He subtly denounces the disinterest in the region,

especially because it was, after all, the source of the Hudson, and as such he refers to the upstate wilderness:

> Tourists steamed upon the estuary of the Hudson, or loitered through the populous counties between the cities of New York and Albany, and, ignorant or unmindful that in ascending to the head of tide-water they had not seen quite one-half of the lordly stream, discussed its claims to consideration with an amiable familiarity, and, comparing its scenery with that of other celebrated rivers, they settled its whole character after a most summary fashion. (4)

Already in the first chapter, Hoffman sets the tone of the sketches to follow. He makes a brief geographical and topographical description of the region, and he alludes to its picturesque nature and to its mythical qualities. His reference to the general oblivion regarding the watersheds reflects how still in the 1830s much of the Adirondacks were yet to be explored, and mentions that Emmons's geological survey was the first serious attempt to illuminate the state as to its wilderness. By the time that Headley visited the Adirondacks, Hoffman's pieces had served their purpose, and intellectuals and a considerable number of tourists visited the woods. The escapist craze would not come until the publication of W.H.H. Murray's *Adventures in the Wilderness*, but still, Hoffman and Headley played a crucial role in illustrating the romantic potential of the region. Thus, while Hoffman's chief purpose appears to be to raise awareness on the existence of the Adirondacks, Headley is more focused on exploiting its romantic qualities, taking Hoffman's briefer, sketchier allusions to the picturesque and to iconic characters to the limit.

Hoffman's fascination with geological features often leads him to present nature as an architect. He claims that the country is yet geologically "unfinished" (30), and admires nature's capacity to renew as much as to maintain the history of the land. What is particularly interesting about Hoffman's descriptions is his choice of words. Upon delineating a wild gorge, he writes how

> Tops are thatched with lichens that must be the growth of centuries; ancient trees are perched upon their pinnacles, and enormous twisted roots, which form a network over the chasms between them, and save your limbs from destruction when stepping over the treacherous moss that hide these black abysses, prove that the repairing hand of nature has been here at work for ages in covering up the ruin she has wrought in some one moment of violence. (58)

The terminology is borrowed from the field of architecture ("pinnacles," "ruin"), but it is an architecture that distances itself from the harmony and proportions of neoclassicism. Elements are personified: trees are "perched," the moss is "treacherous" and nature, the ultimate creator, appears as a capricious entity susceptible to fits of violent destruction as much as to periods for decorating and covering up the mess. The overall aesthetic is one where passions are involved, sizes and proportions refuse to match, and more importantly, nature results in a pathway that is somewhat torturous for the passerby. This type of discourse is characteristic of Hoffman, and reflects the growing influence of Burke's theory. In the passage dedicated to Mount Marcy, in which he openly refers to the categories of the beautiful and the sublime, he is again semantically decorous:

> The effect was equally beautiful and sublime. The frost had here and there flecked the forest with orange and vermilion, touching a single sumach or a clump of maples at

> long intervals, but generally, the woods displayed as yet but few autumnal tints: and the deep verdure of the adjacent mountains set off the snowy peak in such high contrast, soaring as it did far above them, and seeming to piece, as it were, the blue sky which curtained them, that the poetic Indian epithet of TA-HA-WUS (*he splits the sky*), was hardly too extravagant to characterize its peculiar grandeur. (77)

Hoffman's nature answers to the wider American gaze upon painting in the national quest for patriotic sentiment. In the last paragraph of his sketches he resumes this idea by synthesising that the sources of the Hudson are a place "where the painter might find an ever-varying novelty for the exercise of his art" (122). Though it would be during the 1850s and the 1860s when landscape painting would truly emerge as the most nationalist artistic form of expression–particularly due to the success of the Hudson River School and Thomas Cole–Hoffman was one of the many writers to anticipate the relevance of pictorial sceneries for the consideration of incorrupt nature as the source of a truly American history. If bringing awareness of the Adirondacks and the frontier was Hoffman's main purpose, applying a vocabulary based on painting and architecture was a befitting choice. After all, throughout most of the nineteenth century "eastern Americans were more likely to see their wilderness in a gallery than on an expedition" (Miller, 92). Headley continuously emphasizes upon the picturesque qualities of the Adirondack landscape and on the figure of the painter as a patriot as well. The 1853 edition of *The Adirondack* included engravings of drawings from Charles Cromwell Ingham, Regis François Gignoux, and Asher Brown Durand to illustrate the narrative. He even dedicates a full chapter to personifying autumn as a painter, echoing Hoffman's reference to nature as an architect. He begins the chapter by attributing a nationalistic quality to the colors of the fall:

> No country can compare with ours in the richness, at least of its *autumn* scenery. The mountains of the eastern world are not wooded like ours, and hence cannot exhibit such a mass of foliage as they present. But if you wish to behold autumn in its glory, you must stand on some height that overlooks this vast wilderness. What seemed to you in summer an interminable sea of green, becomes a limitless expanse of the richest colors –a vast collection of fragmentary rainbows. And the different effects of *light* on different portions is most astonishing. Here a mountain blazes in splendor, and there a valley looks like a kaleidoscope –just so variegated and confused. (280)

The artist that so vividly ornaments nature in such harmonic pigments is none other than the autumn itself, "obeying no law but that of beauty" (285). Autumn has "brought out colors where you never discovered anything but barrenness before" (283), he has made sure that every leaf is "carefully shaded" and "delicately touched" (285).

Headley unceasingly compares the Adirondacks to the European landscape not only in terms of beauty but in terms of the sublime. The entire text is replete with sentences contrasting the Adirondacks to the Alps, which Headley had previously visited and stood as the most impressive scenery of the European continent and a clear source of pride for romantics. Sometimes a certain Adirondack features is claimed by Headley to be superior to the Alps, and other times another feature is described as equal to them; but never are the Adirondacks portrayed in any way as inferior, neither in beauty nor in sublimity. The following is just one example of the many resplendent excerpts regarding this subject that can be found in *The Adirondack*. In this extract, Headley describes the landscape he contemplated when climbing Mount Marcy. His attention to visual detail is indispensable for transmitting the beautiful and the sublime: "I have climbed the Alps and the Appenines," he writes, "but never found foot and eye in such

requisition before" (57). A few paragraphs later, when he has reached the top, he elaborates on this notion:

> It was wholly different from the Alps. There were no peaks and shining glaciers; but all was grey, or green, or black, as far as the vision could extend. It looked as if the Almighty had once set this vast earth rolling like the sea; and then, in the midst of its maddest flow, bid all the gigantic billows stop and congeal in their places. And there they stood, just as He froze them –grand and gloomy. There was the long swell –and there the deep cresting, bursting billow –and there, too, the deep, black, cavernous gulf. Far away . . . a storm was raging, and the massive clouds over the distant mountains of Vermont, or rather *between* us and them, and below their summits, stood balanced in space, with their white tops towering over their black and dense bases, as if they were the margin of Jehova's mantle folded back to let the earth beyond be seen. That far-away storm against the background of mountains, and with nothing but the most savage scenery between–how mysterious–how awful it seemed!
>
> Mount Colden, with its terrific precipices –Mount McIntyre, with its bold, black, barren, monster-like-head –White Face, with its white spot on its forehead, and countless other summits pierced the heavens in every direction. And then, such a stretch of forest, for more than a hundred miles in circumference –ridges and slopes of green, broken only by lakes that dared just to peep into view from their deep hiding-places –one vast wilderness seamed here and there by a river whose surface you could not see, but whose course you could follow by the black winding gap through the top of the trees. Still there was beauty as well as grandeur in the scene. (60-62)

The images Headley describes above correspond aesthetically to the category of the sublime. The vastness of the landscape, the "raging" storm, the "savage scenery" and the "piercing" peaks contribute to the writer's response: he becomes an awed and somewhat terrified beholder, as Burke predicted when he claimed that "terror . . . [is] the ruling principle of the sublime" (54). Of course, the subject is not completely passive in this regard, and there is no doubt that in an inverse process, it was also Headley who used his imagination to *make* the scenery a sublime one. This is not lost on Burke, who understood that passions were the determining variable for the representation of nature, and explained that "to things of great dimensions, if we annex the adventitious idea of terror, they become without comparison greater" (53). Headley plays with the ideas of terror and astonishment constantly to enhance the effect of the sublime, but in a few occasions he deciphers the psychological process as well. In the first chapter, for example, he describes his arrival to the Adirondacks on a horse-drawn carriage in gothic terms. During the rough night trip, menacing, terrifying elements appear before him: there is a "bright flash of lightning" (15) and there are "shivered trunks and blackened stumps" (16); there is an "utter blackness" followed by "the sullen thunder, swelling gradually from the low growl into the deep vibrating peal that shook the hills" (16); and exoticism is added by the "Egyptian darkness" (17) embracing it all. The driver, the horses, and Headley himself are in a state of anxiety and confusion, feeling the power of the sublime swallowing them up. Sublimity, after all, is an intrinsic part of the gothic style, and Headley was certainly not the only one to use it in order to convey terror upon his reader. In any case, he acknowledges that terror had resulted from an uncontrollable fit of passion and the imagination, and upon reaching the village, his eye was "aided by judgement" and consequently the surroundings "became a beautiful creation" (17).

Nature is celebrated for its sublime and beautiful features, but also because it is the most visible creation of the hand of God. Deistic beliefs permeate the work of Hoffman, who welcomed the scientific insight of geologists such as Emmons and other naturalists. For

example, in a small islet in the outlet of Lake Sanford, Hoffman claims that a botanist had found "upwards of a hundred varieties of plants and trees" (20). It is in Headley's book, however, where deism truly unfolds the divine quality of nature, for after all, he was a preacher. Following the description of sublime and beautiful views upon climbing Mount Marcy, Headley concludes that such aesthetic qualities were rooted in God's divine power for creation (in contrast to the rationalization that we have seen above, where man appeared as the agent, not as the object):

> My head swam in the wondrous vision; and I seemed lifted up above the earth, and shown all its mountains and forests and lakes at once. But the impression of the whole, it is impossible to convey –nay, I am myself hardly conscious what it is. It seems as if I had seen vagueness, terror, sublimity, strength, and beauty, all embodied, so that I had a new and more definite knowledge of them. God appears to have wrought in these old mountains with His highest power, and designed to leave a symbol of His omnipotence. Man is nothing here, his very shouts die on his lips . . . "God is great!" is the language of the heart, as it swells over such a scene. (62-63)

It is no wonder, therefore, that Headley is elated by the divine presence of God in nature while he takes a critical, patronizing viewpoint over the alienating life of New York City urbanites. In one of the letters, Headley laments the unenviable situation of his friend and takes the opportunity to eulogize his own choice in heading to the Adirondacks: "I pity you from the heart; you have been in Wall Street the whole of this scorching day," Headley writes, "and have not drawn a breath below your throat, for the air you live on was never made for the lungs" (95-96). Envisioning his friend's state of affairs, he goes on to add:

> You are pale and exhausted, while now and then comes over you, a sweet vision of rushing streams and waving tree tops, and cool floods of air. I see you in imagination, flung at full length upon the sofa, and hear that expression of impatience which escapes your lips. But here it is delicious –my lungs heave freely and strongly, and every moment refreshes instead of enervates me. (96)

Aside from the aesthetic interest that Hoffman and Headley place in their writing, both works are considered part of the Adirondack literary canon for their portrayal of Adirondack characters. From farmers and miners to hunters, Hoffman (and particularly Headley) outline the frontier lifestyle of the settlers. In item 4.6. we will focus on writers who made Adirondackers their subject matter, but in the case of Hoffman and Headley, it is crucial to understand their characterization of a specific type of frontiersman: the Adirondack guide. It is their romantic delineation which has lifted the guide to an emblematic, mythical status, while simultaneously provisioning New York (and the rest of the nation) with a national archetypical referent and therefore a source of pride. Hoffman and Headley were essential contributors to the literature surrounding the legendary John Cheney (1800-1877), a New Hampshire native whose skills as a guide, hunter–and even as a cook–were commemorated in the works of other writers as well, such as William Redfield, Charles Lanman, and Farrand Benedict. Cheney also appears in the writings of Ebenezer Emmons, for it was he who guided the geologist in the ascent of Mount Marcy. Cheney stands out as one of the epic Adirondack guides, next to names such as Mitchell Sabattis, Alvah Dunning, Bill Nye, Orson Phelps, and John Plumey, and was part of what Brumley refers to as the "golden years" of the Adirondacks (1836-1865), before the apogee of tourism, hotels, and elitist camps, and before the emergence of the first guides associations and license stipulations. During these years guides were more in touch with the earlier philosophy and methods of

Indians and epic New York trappers such as Nick Stoner and Nat Foster, whose lives were vividly illustrated by Jeptha Simms in *Trappers of New York* (1850). Several of Cheney's recollections were recorded again and again by travel writers and historians, such as the time he accidentally shot himself in the leg and walked back home fourteen miles, the story of his encounter with a cougar, or the story of how Duck Pond came to be known as Calamity Pond. Though apparently Cheney lacked the physical presence and the deep voice that would have made him an ideal subject for romanticists, he excelled so much in every type of woodsman skill and craft that none of his clients were left indifferent, and they all celebrated his seemingly innate abilities and intuition. As much as tourists or long-time travellers believed that they could handle the strenuous ways of camping, fishing, or hunting, guides such as Cheney proved to be indispensable for the performance of practically any desired activity. Brumley lists some of the guides' basic duties aside from the obvious aiding hand for hunting:

> Dozens of tasks around camp called for the guide's ingenuity: rigging a cooking pot over fire; building a smudge to keep bugs away; patching a new hole in his boat; skinning and gutting game; storing the food away from big or little mauraders; finding good firewood; keeping his sports dry, warm and well-fed; predicting the weather, suggesting the right fishing lures; building the shanty, etc. For these tasks the guide wore many figurative hats, including cook, chore-boy, raconteur, woodsman and philosopher. His best technique, improvisation, had to be ready on a moment's notice – there was no telling what a city sport might do or what might be needed. (17)

When Hoffman wrote his sketches, he was clearly under the influence of James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking series, and found in Cheney a real-life version of the Deerslayer:

> I could swear that Cooper took the character of Natty Bumppo, from my mountaineer friend, John Cheney. The same silent, simple, deep love of the woods –the same gentleness and benevolence of feeling toward all who love his craft –the same unobtrusive kindness toward all others; and lastly, the same shrewdness as a woodman, and gamesomeness of spirit as a hunter, are common to both. (35-36)

It would be more accurate to claim that it was actually Hoffman who projected the character of Bumppo into Cheney. It is not to say that Cheney's skills were not the result of an expertise that only dedication to the frontier life could develop; his hunting and scouting abilities were clearly impressive. But Hoffman's interest in Cheney's personal traits and his sense of ethics reflect the writer's search for a noble, intuitive hero. Hoffman's Cheney is a man who, like Bumppo, morally stands between primitive Indian ways and the rationale that only a white man could posses. It is the only way to survive in the wilderness: man must adapt to the environment, learn to use all his senses and rely on them religiously. Needless to say, Hoffman's proud exaltation of Cheney is of course determined by the fact that the guide was a white man. As we will see in Headley's portrayal of Mitchell Sabattis, Indians who had acquired the same skill were regarded differently, as an object of exoticism. In any case, Hoffman's eulogy of Cheney is maintained throughout the sketches tirelessly: "Honest John Cheney," Hoffman writes, "thou art at once as stanch a hunter, and as true and gentle a practiser of woodcraft as ever roamed the broad forest" (61). In a similar note, Headley refers to him as "the mighty hunter, Cheney" (51), and alludes to the simplicity with which the guide turned to life in the woods when as a young man, he "became enamored of the forest life" and "with his rifle on his shoulder, plunged into this then unknown, untrodden wilderness" (75). It is this same simplicity of motives which intrigues and

fascinates romanticist sportsmen. Hoffman confesses his initial surprise when he saw that Cheney carried a pistol rather than a gun. His confusion turned to understanding when the guide recounted how he once crushed the skull of a wolf with a rifle, killing the animal but damaging the barrel. Rather than purchasing another rifle, Cheney resolved to carry with him a more adequate gear: "I got me this pistol," Hoffman quotes him, "which being light and handy, enables me more conveniently to carry an axe upon long tramps, and make myself comfortable in the woods" (85). Everything about Cheney, from his personality to his attire, is motivated by an experience. In other words, he adapts perfectly to the environment, carrying with him only what he has learned is necessary, being *practical* and ridding himself of the decorum that urban social life masks man with. Headley's reaction to Cheney's story of a deadly encounter with a panther resembles Hoffman's observations:

> Being a little curious to know whether he was not somewhat agitated in finding himself in such close proximity to a panther all ready for the fatal leap, I asked him how he felt when he saw the animal crouching so near. "I felt," said he coolly, "as if I should kill him." I need not tell you that *I* felt a little foolish at the answer . . . for the perfect simplicity of the reply took me all aback." (77)

Cheney's practicality, reflected in his very discourse, was the result of the lessons learned in preparation, improvisation and restraint in the wilderness. In a romanticist fit for the adulation of such a character, Headley goes on to exclaim: "How a border-life sharpens a man's wits. Especially in an emergency does he show to what strict discipline he has subjected his mind" (83).

Hoffman's account of John Cheney's ethics reflects the controversy that was beginning to form around the method of deer-hunting. In his sketch "The Dog and the Deer-Stalker," Hoffman reports the opposing opinions between those who hounded the deer and still-hunters, which consisted in the traditional walk through the woods in search of the deer to shoot. Hoffman settles the argument between the practitioners by stating that "deer-drivers and still-hunters, only want their poet, or historian, to make their interminable bickerings, as celebrated as those of the Guelphs and Ghibelines" (87-88). But of course things were not as simple as that. Because of the profound diminishment of game, personal ethical choices soon derived in the need of regulating each of the practices either through prohibition or through hunting seasons. But Hoffman's explanation of the matter is evidently romanticist, and as such he uses the deer with the purpose of sticking to the ethical side of the frontier life. This is not coincidental; according to Terrie, "the Adirondack deer symbolized the goodness of nature as well as its bounty" and the hunter dwelled in "the paradox in his sentimental attitude toward the deer and his simultaneous impulse to eat it for dinner" (1985: 48-49). Hoffman is true to this sentimentality, under which he justifies Cheney's point of view as an advocate of hounding and an enemy of still-hunting and jacklighting:

> "How can a man sleep sound in the woods," saith John Cheney . . . "when he has the heart to lure the mother of a fawn to the very muzzle of his rifle by bleating at her: or who has shot down the brutes by torchlight, when they come to the waterside to cool themselves at nightfall? It ain't nateral, and such hunting–it hunting they call it–will never prosper." Honest John! whatever may be the merits of the question, he has reason to feel sore upon the subject, from the sad and ignoble death which the hound who played so gallant a part in his wolf encounter, met with at the hands of the still-hunters. (88-89)

Cheney was a prosperous deer hunter despite the fact that, as Hoffman tries to conveys, he did feel akin to the animal. Life in the frontier required for man to make the best out of his resources, and Cheney's early conservationist ethics were of interest to Hoffman and no doubt to other clients who had yet to learn adequate principles of sportsmanship. Towards the end of Hoffman's trip to the sources of the Hudson, the writer points to an anecdote that, either intently or not, only evidences how far he is yet from comprehending the philosophy of the true woodsman:

> After killing three or four partridges . . . John could not be prevailed on to shoot at more. I several times called his attention to a good shot, but he always answered shaking his head. "It's wrong, it's wrong, sir, to use up life in that way –here's birds enough for them that wants to eat them, and that saddle of venison on the buckboard will only be wasted, if I kill more of these poor things." (117)

In the case of Headley's accounts of the guide Mitchell Sabattis (1824?-1906), who was also portrayed by L.E. Chittenden in his *Personal Reminiscences,* traits similar to those of Cheney are visible. However, the fact that Sabattis was a pure-blooded Abenaki induced Headley to justify such traits as natural to the Indian race. Sabattis is often depicted as an exotic object; his alertness, his quietness, and his hunting skills result from the congenital temperament of his people. He is "taciturn and emotionless as his race always are" (122), he is "silent and thoughtful as his race" (183), and he delights Headley with "an exhibition of the stealthy movements of an Indian" (186). Notice how in the following excerpt, Headley, always taking whatever opportunity to evoke the picturesque, beholds the guide as if he were part of the scenery:

> The careless, indolent manner so natural to him had disappeared as if by magic, and he stood up in the stern of the boat as straight as his own rifle, while his dark eye glanced like an eagle's. Every nerve in him seemed to have been suddenly touched by an electric spark –and he has now stooped to elude the watchfulness of the deer, and now again stood erect, with his rifle raised to his shoulder, he was one of the most picturesque objects I ever saw. (177)

Headley remarks that he felt respect for Sabattis, but he also claims to "love" (166) him. In a way this reveals the patronizing attitude that Headley, a man of his time, exhibited towards the "other." Romanticism proclaimed Indians as noble savages and as the innocent roamers of the pristine forests, but even if Indians were primitive and noble, they lacked white man's intellect to make them morally superior. Thus, in contrast with Hoffman's observations on Cheney's ethics, Headley's reaction is one of surprise in realizing that he can learn moral values from an Indian. At the verge of shooting a female duck in the middle of her dramatic "wounded bird" act to save her ducklings, Headley recalls the following:

> I instinctively raised my rifle to my shoulder: then thinking the shot might frighten the deer we were after, I turned to Mitchell and inquired if I should fire. "I guess I wouldn't," he replied; "she has young ones." My gun dropped in a moment. I stood rebuked, not only by my own feelings, but by the Indian with me. I was shocked that this hunter who had lived so many years on the spoils of the forest, should teach me tenderness of feeling. (161-162)

As I have anticipated earlier, romantic descriptions of guides, whether these were white-skinned or Indians, were strongly influenced by the archetypes and stereotypes created by popular frontier literature. In the following item we recede to the 1820s for a quick

glimpse at the fictional versions of these woodsmen, those which determined how writers like Hoffman and Headley, in their efforts to pinpoint the characteristics of true "Americaness," would look upon their guides.

### 4.4. The Adirondacks and the Popular Novel: James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*

Critics throughout the nineteenth and the twentieth century have given widespread attention to what is most likely the most celebrated novel of the Leatherstocking tales, *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826). Considering the overwhelming amount of literature on the book and the aim of this case study, this item will consider the relevance of *Mohicans* solely in terms of its contribution to an Adirondack cultural and literary tradition. Such a regional tradition constitutes a metonymical extension not only of the wider search for American qualities and identifying features, but also of the popular culture phenomenon taking over the nation. Indeed, the Leatherstocking series marks the emergence of romanticist premises inside the context of popular literature. Despite the fact that Romanticism did not truly flourish in America until the mid-1830s, Cooper, among other novelists, was already articulating its fundamental categories (primitiveness, the distinction between sublime and beautiful landscapes, the frontiersman's "code of honor" according to instinct and a sensuous relationship to the environment) in his fiction. *The Last of the Mohicans* presents the reader with formulas characteristic of popular novels while engaging a complex dialogue between the past and the present, between European purity of blood and American hybridization, and most specifically for our case, between regional and universal (American) archetypes that have become cultural referents beyond the Adirondack borders.

Let us first begin with a word on popular fiction. A short definition of popular novels is that they are based on the success of simple narrative formulas which are easily accessible by readers. The aim of the book is to become a bestseller, and as such, entertaining the reader must be the author's prime objective. Plot action, a touch of romance, adventure, and most importantly, the creation of characters that function upon the purity of their symbolic value (the characters are either good or bad, heroes or enemies) are part of the basic ingredients. Thus, aside from entertainment and the possibility for evasion and escapism, what the popular novel provides is also a code of conduct. Because the boundaries between good and evil are so clearly defined, the reader is psychologically expected to "choose" sides (this choice, of course, is automatically conditioned by the formula itself, and the reader will inevitably identify his morality with that of the "good" characters); in other words, literary stereotypes and social types are destined to be either embraced or despised by the reader. However imaginatively idealistic the fictional world created by the writer may be, it is still a believable world for the reader because the very conventions governing the formulas are always related to the reader's experience and basic world-knowledge. When western novels became one of the first American subgenres of popular fiction, it was mainly because the space for action and plot development–the western frontier–was very much alive in political discourses and territorial bills and treaties, and was an actual reality for thousands of pioneers transforming the nation's wilderness. Thus, Bret Harte's famous stories, "The Luck of Roaring Camp" (1868) and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" (1869) were highly successful because readers were familiar (either through first-hand experience or because of what they learned from newspapers or new territorial laws)

with the kind of "society" that was being forged with the construction of the railroads. Similarly, Owen Wister's *The Virginian* (1902) was enthusiastically received because of the general sentiment of nostalgia caused by the 1890 Census, which had officially declared the end of the frontier. In this way, the fictional yet believable world depicted in popular novels provided immediate excitement and gratification for the reader, who was urged to consume the book because of the suspenseful expectancies that nurtured the formula. All in all, the process of popular fiction as a genre and as a product is a deterministic one: a certain culture, defined by the space and time within which it develops, determines the familiar, believable world which the novel should create. The novel, which is only written with the purpose of being sold, pleases its audience by sticking to a formula within that believable world, and at the same time determines a moral conduct which conditions its readers to identify with the "good" characters. There is a certain danger in this deterministic process, of course, and when the literary world is deemed too believable mimetic conducts between fiction and reality can, as we will see, distort a culture's perception of reality.

James Fenimore Cooper (1798-1851) has been considered by most critics as a writer of romances, a popular fiction genre of the nineteenth century. Many of these critics, however, have pointed out that innovative, defying elements regarding characters or scenes classify Cooper's writing at another level inside the context of popular fiction (for example, in *Mohicans*, Natty Bumppo is not the gallant male who attracts or is attracted by Munro's daughters, Cora and Alice; this role is instead relegated to the English Major Duncan Heyward, and to the doomed Mohican, Uncas). In any case, we will consider the significance of the novel from the perspective of popular fiction and its effects on Adirondack tradition. Published in 1826, *The Last of the Mohicans* was the second of the Leatherstocking series –it was preceded by *The Pioneers* (1823) and would be followed by *The Prairie* (1827), *The Pathfinder* (1840), and *The Deerslayer* (1841). The series constructed an account of the history of the frontier through different periods of Bumppo's life, though not in chronological order. *The Pioneers*, for example, is set in 1793, and the last novel, *The Deerslayer*, in the 1740s and early 1750s. The series' main theme is the construction of the American nation, a nation built on a set of values as a reaction against "the feudal remnants of the European and British past" (Hutson, v) which Cooper believed were at the verge of disappearing. *Mohicans* bore the subtitle "A Narrative of 1757" and was indeed part of the first attempts in the literary sphere at the elaboration of historical novels, a thematic choice that is said to have been initiated in Europe with Walter Scott's *Waverly* (1840). *Mohicans* revolves around the French and Indian War as it came to pass in the Lake George region (which Cooper conveniently calls "Horican"), with the Fort William Henry Massacre as the central, historical event towards which the first part of the plot is directed, and which determines the development of the second part of the action (see item 3.1. of the Main Page on the French and Indian War).

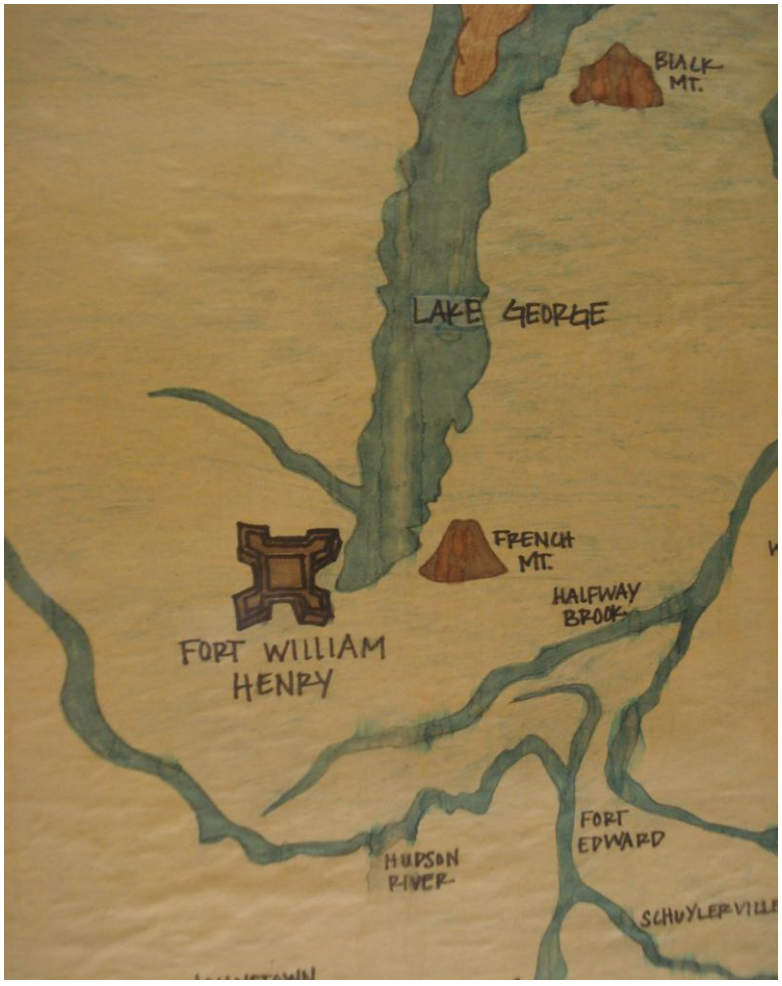
The plot, as is typical of romance novels, is filled with action. The adventure begins with the journey made by Cora and Alice from Fort Edward to Fort William Henry to be reunited with their father, Colonel Munro. The party consists also of Major Duncan Heyward, who is secretly in love with Alice, David Gamut, a Protestant psalmist, and their guide, Magua. Along the way, the group encounters Natty Bumppo (also called Leatherstocking, the scout, and Hawk-eye, for his impeccable aim with the rifle), Chingachgook, a Mohican, and his son, Uncas. Bumppo unveils that Magua is a Huron, and that he is planning an attack on the party. Magua escapes and Bumppo escorts the

bunch to safety in a cave by a waterfall. When they are ambushed by Magua and other Hurons, Hawk-eye and the Mohicans abandon the women, Heyward, and Gamut with the promise that they will rescue them from their captors. It is during this captivity that Magua reveals his plot for revenge against Colonel Munro, who humiliated him before his tribe, causing his exile. Magua also urges Cora to marry him, but she refuses him. Finally, Hawk-eye and the Mohicans rescue the daughters and their friends, and they bring them to safety to Fort William Henry. On occasion of Heyward's declaration of his love for Alice, Munro tells him that Cora is half African American, and accuses Heyward of not wanting to marry her because of her mixed blood. Interestingly enough and though unknown to both Indians, Uncas and Magua are the ones who feel naturally inclined towards Cora. Munro also learns that the French troops led by General Montcalm are too powerful, and decides to abandon the fort. During the retreat, the Indian allies of the French succumb to their violent passion and attack the debilitated English. During the massacre which Montcalm has inefficiently tried to avoid, Magua captures Alice, Cora, and Gamut once more. Once away from the line of danger, Magua separates the sisters; Alice is now held captive by the Huron and Cora by the Delaware. After a couple of days, Bumppo and his friends, along with Heyward, manage to deceive the Huron and rescue Alice. Cora's rescue at the Delaware camp proves to be more deadly, however, and Uncas, who reveals his Delaware heritage, is forced by the Indian code to admit that Cora, as a prisoner, belongs to Magua. To remedy the situation, Hawk-eye offers himself in exchange for Cora, but Magua rejects the deal. Magua is given a head start and he flees from the camp with his prisoner. After proper war dances and rituals, the chase for the rescue of Cora begins. In the end, the battle between the Delaware and the Huron brings three of the characters to their death: Cora –whom Magua has been unable to bring himself to kill–is stabbed by another Huron, Magua kills Uncas, and Hawk-eye shoots Magua. The novel ends with a relation of the burial of Uncas and with the final words of Tamenund, of the Delaware tribe, who is proud to claim that he has "lived to see the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans" (430).

The formulaic conventions of the romance novel remain very vivid throughout the narrative: from clearly-defined "good" characters and "evil" Indians and characteristic plot traits of adventure and captivity narratives (see Haberly, David, on Works Cited for more on *Mohicans* and the captivity tradition), to the sentimental subplots, the pompous language, and the exoticism implicit in the creation of a common, collective past. Nor is a romantic appreciation of the wilderness missing, and the characterization of the Adirondack wildness according to the aesthetics of the sublime and the beautiful has often been noted by critics relating Cooper's settings to paintings by Thomas Cole, or critics searching for the influence of Burke upon America's most bestselling author of the nineteenth century (see Blakemore, Steven, in Works Cited for more on this subject). Because we have already noted the weight of Burke's aestheticism in the previous item, we shall not engage ourselves with this topic for *Mohicans.* The reader must keep in mind, however, that sublimity and beauty–as well as the fusion between the two, as Blakemore indicates–are also Cooper's stylistic choice in his evocations and descriptions of the wilderness. All of the ingredients listed above paved the way for the narrative's success. In an early anonymous review in the *New York Review*, the critic stated that

> On the first reading of *The Last of the Mohicans*, we are carried onward, as through the visions of a long and feverish dream. The excitement cannot be controlled or lulled, by which we are borne through strange and fearful, and even agonizing scenes of doubt,

surprise, danger, and sudden deliverance; while, like some persecuting demon of slumber, the fiendlike image of a revengeful spirit scowls every where . . . And, as in the changes of an uneasy dream, the monarch Reason sometimes lifts up its head, and suggests that it is all an illusion, a wholesome counsel which the soul assents to, but is yet dragged away by the irresistible power, which hurries it into new fantastic perplexities; so, in the 'long trail' which we are compelled to follow . . . we are unable to pause awhile for judicious deliberation, when a seeming improbability, or an event without a sufficient cause, for a moment awakens our scepticism. We swim rivers, navigate cataracts, recognise the marks of the desert, climb mountains, and penetrate fogs and armies, as easily . . . as did Hawk-eye and the natives, whom we accompany in their perils. (In Dekker, 90)




*Map of the Lake George region. Courtesy of Fort William Henry.*

*Cooper's Cave at Glens Falls, southwest of the blue line. It is believed that Cooper was inspired by these caverns and waterfalls to write the scene in which Hawk-eye and his friends attempt to hide from the Huron ambush. Today the South Glens Falls Hydroelectric Project stands in the place of a landscape that Natty Bumppo described as follows:*

*"If you had daylight, it would be worth the trouble to step up on the height of this rock, and look at the perversity of the water. It falls by no rule at all; sometimes it leaps, sometimes it tumbles; there, it skips; here, it shoots; in one place 'tis white as snow, and in another 'tis green as grass; hereabouts, it pitches into deep hollows, that rumble and quake the 'arth." (62)*

This response on the part of the reader is typical of popular fiction, at least during a first, fresh reading. As the reviewer indicates, despite the fact that the reader might easily perceive incongruent or discordant elements, formulaic conventions persuade him to set his discrepancies aside, and accept the fictional world as believable. Whether a conscious psychological process or not, what this involves is the reader's acceptance and confirmation of the validity of the formulas, which, among other things, implies the authenticity of the incongruent elements.

Now, for our case, we will focus solely on how the character of Natty Bumppo has reached this mythical status to the extent that he was (and might still be) popularly conceived as a plausible reflection of the real Adirondack frontiersman. Cooper created a protagonist who could have only been bred in America: he is a man with untainted morals values, yet does not answer to any specific creed; a man whose instinct and intuitiveness separate him from Eurocentric codes of conduct and survival, which in the American wilderness, as is proven through the initial inefficiency of Heyward in protecting the sisters, are completely useless; a man whose hybridization is based on the environment, not on biological heritage. Purity of blood and racial immaculateness is a complicated theme in *Mohicans.* Cora, who is partly black, attracts Uncas and Magua, suggesting perhaps that the Indian race, which according to Cooper answers to passions, not to reason, is predisposed towards maintaining the status of the "other." The Cora-Uncas-Magua triangle has further significance: according to Robert Milder, "the issue Cooper addresses is not the sexual anxiety raised by the prospects of miscegenation . . . but the cultural anxiety surrounding the possible incorporation of the Indian and the Negro into American society" (427). It is no coincidence either that it is Uncas, Magua, and Cora who perish, for Cooper was alluding to the doomed fate of Indians just as much as to that of the black race in the new nation. Meanwhile, Heyward is in love with Alice, who is one hundred percent of English blood, and despite his denial of Munro's accusations, he subtly reveals a taint of racism in his choice between the daughters. In this confluence of deterministic fates according to purity or impurity of blood, Natty Bumppo emerges as the true hero, and the one who has best assimilated the type of hybridization that will define the American individualist. He repeats several times throughout the novel that pure, white blood runs through his veins; however, he has adapted himself to the exigencies of the wilderness in a similar manner as the Indians. Hawk-eye acknowledges the futility of Eurocentric methods of survival: he mocks Gamut for his singing, for he knows that in the realm of the wilderness, there is little that Calvinistic faith can do. He also rejects the corporative, methodological organization of Eurocentric militias when he claims that "he who wishes to prosper in Indian warfare . . . must not be too proud to learn from the wit of a native" (251). Bumppo's spontaneity and ability to improvise make him a skilful warrior. While conservative, eastern codes rely on a series of corporative laws based on tradition, Hawk-eye places his individual experience as the basis from which to act. Instinct and intuition do not deceive the individual, who has learned to survive within the wilderness world. There is no place for instinct in a society which functions according to reason and tradition, and that is why the English and the French forces will never assimilate the battlegrounds in which they are struggling. European kings and loyalties to the crown mean nothing to a wilderness which is indifferent to traditions and religions that were developed in far-away continents. Hawk-eye knows this not because he has rationalized about it, but because his pragmatism has taught him so. When David Gamut asks Bumppo what holy book might guide his conduct, the scout explains the reason for his contempt towards any covenant other than self-reliance:

> "Book!" repeated Hawk-eye, with singular and ill-concealed disdain. "Do you take me for a whimpering boy at the apron string of one of your old gals; and this good rifle on my knee for the feather of a goose's wing, my ox's horn for a bottle of ink, and my leathern pouch for a crossbarred handkercher to carry my dinner? Book! What have such as I, who am a warrior of the wilderness, though a man without a cross, to do with books? I never read but in one, and the words that are written there are too simple and too plain to need much schooling; though I may boast that of forty long and hardworking years."
>
> "What call you the volume?" said David, misconceiving the other's meaning.
>
> "'Tis open before your eyes," returned the scout; "and he who owns it is not a niggard of its use. I have heard it said that there are men who read in books to convince themselves there is a God. I know not but man may so deform his works in the settlements, as to leave that which is so clear in the wilderness a matter of doubt among traders and priests." (140)

It is no wonder that R.W.B. Lewis claims that Natty Bumppo represents "the hero in space," for not only is Cooper's legendary character a pure-blooded white man who has been able to decipher the necessary code for survival in the wilderness, but the very mystifying process has deprived him of a history, in the sense that his epic status has been able to transcend time. Lewis explains that Bumppo "seems to take his start outside time, or on the very outer edges of it, so that his location is essentially in space alone," and that "his initial habitat is space as spaciousness, as the unbounded, the area of total possibility" (91). This idea answers to the same process that Roland Barthes defined in *Mythologies* (1957), according to which mystification is a linguistic distortion whereupon the mystified object is naturalized as an "a-historical" entity. To put it more simply, Hawk-eye has an epic meaning only to the extent of his connection to a particular space, the wilderness frontier. Without this space, the character has no reason for being, and he becomes completely unnecessary and irrelevant to a culture. When we refer to the deprivation of his history, this does not mean that we forget the time period of his adventures or his key role in the context of the formation of America, but rather, that Bumppo is highly significant for the culture of the same space in a different era. He has become a cultural referent for the Adirondacks and for the United States in general, and his individualism is one that has been evoked and imitated more than a century after the publication of the Leatherstocking tales.

Following this line of thought, it seems logical to understand the reason why the figure of Bumppo has been conjured several times in Adirondack literature and even in more bizarre scenarios, as we will presently see. After all, he is part of the "mythistorical" heritage of the region, a paradigm that not only explains history, but more importantly perpetuates a justification of it. As fictional as he may be, his conduct was all-too-believable, and what Bumppo provides is precisely a model foundation in times of confusion. Joseph Mali notes that

> Myths are not dogmatic but dramatic stories of tradition. They become significant precisely in moments when common traditional meanings of life and history have become indeterminate, as in wars or revolutions, and their social utility is to sustain the structural tradition of society by some dramatic reactivation of its original motivation. (5)

As I have stated above, the formulas of popular literature and the credibility of the world created might erode the distance between fiction and reality. In the previous item, I referred to Charles Fenno Hoffman's statement on the resemblance between John Cheney and Natty Bumppo. It was Hawk-eye's traits that Hoffman was searching for in

Cheney, not vice versa, and this would establish a trend in Adirondack tourism by which visiting sportsmen sought the accompaniment of a guide that would remind them of the character they had read so much about. (Millionaire William West Durant, would as well follow the *Mohicans* craze, and named his second great camp "Camp Uncas.") Eventually, the Adirondack guide would reach a mythical status of its own. Brumley notes that

> Once the guides had surpassed Bumpo in woodcraft and were established in their own right, they began to be treated in literature less as Bumpo replicas, and more as Adirondack guides. The guides' woodsman skills, simplicity, naivety, and basic integrity are the traits most often portrayed. (54)

Natty Bumppo as the foundational referent, however, was never to be lost. Surely enough the mythology surrounding the guide had real legendary characters to adhere to, from the trappers Nick Stoner and Nat Foster to John Cheney, Alvah Dunning, or Orson Phelps, but the guides themselves knew the effects that Cooper's novels had on the public, and perpetuated–often artificially–the resemblance to Bumppo. None other than Theodore Roosevelt, whose association to the Adirondacks and to sportsmanship we will also view in this case study, wrote of the immortality of Natty Bumppo as a heroic referent where "the strenuous life" meets patriotism:

> Fenimore Cooper has preserved for always the likenesses of these stark pioneer settlers and backwoods hunters; uncouth, narrow, hard, suspicious, but with all the virile virtuous of a young and masterful race, a race of mighty breeders, mighty fighters, mighty commonwealth builders. As for Leatherstocking, he is one of the undying men of story; grand, simple, kindly, pure-minded, staunchly loyal, the type of steel-thewed and iron-willed hunter-warrior. (2004: 455)

But one of the most interesting cases in which the figure of Leatherstocking was roused was in relation to the famous Adirondack trapper, Nat Foster (1767-1841). Foster gained a reputation amongst sportsmen and Adirondackers as an excellent hunter and trapper, one of the genuine woodsmen of the region. He reportedly killed more than seventy deer, more than thirty bears, and more than twenty wolves in a single season, along with other fur-bearing animals. He was also notorious for his adversity towards Indians, and was distrustful towards any kind of dealing or partnership with them. Foster did not bother to conceal his dislike for them, and even fostered rumours circulating around the Fulton Chain region about having disposed of more than one Indian in the solitude of the forests.

Ultimately, Foster was taken to trial for the murder of his neighbor, Peter Waters, known as "Drid." The trial brought Foster's popularity to its climax, and when Joseph Grady published his history of the Adirondacks in 1933, a century after the trial, he could still claim that "[Foster] looms heroically in the region's history as the slayer of the last Indian known to fall in the long series of feuds that have added bloody romance to the historical literature of the mountains" (71). Drid, an Indian of the St. Regis tribe who had been cast out by his people, lived with his family in the same vicinity as Foster. For a long time the animosity between the two men was confined to verbal insults and death threats, but when Drid, who was in his late twenties, assaulted Foster, now in his mid-sixties, with a knife, the old trapper resolved to take matters into his own hands. The next morning, on September 17, 1833, Foster shot Drid as he was paddling his canoe, before several witnesses who were part of the fishing excursion the

Indian was participating in. Taking responsibility for his actions, Foster turned himself in at Lewis County, only to find that nobody would issue a warrant for his arrest there. He was more successful in Herkimer County, and after a year in jail, the trial was celebrated on September 3 and 4, 1834. The testimonies of the eye-witnesses turned out to be unsubstantial, partly because none were willing to truthfully allege that it had been Foster who had shot Drid –most of them were, after all, friends or acquaintances of Foster's. The verdict was clear: "not guilty," which pleased not only Foster, but also the multitude that had cheered for the trapper and embraced him as a hero.

Foster was, after all, a local celebrity, and his extermination of Drid was generally deemed as beneficial by the Adirondack folk, who for the most part felt that Indians were a potential nuisance for their pioneering activities. But what is of particular interest for our case is the fact that not only did Foster's principal biographers refer to him as Natty Bumppo in some form, but that his own attorney for his defense, E.P. Hurlbut, "claimed that James Fenimore Cooper had actually modelled Natty Bumppo after his client" (Schneider, 75). At the time of the murder and the trial, the firsts of Cooper's novels were highly popular among the masses, and Adirondackers must have found in Foster, the epitome of the frontiersman, a source of pride. When Jeptha Simms published *Trappers of New York* in 1850, he referred to Foster as the "modern Leatherstocking" (177, 181); but it was the Reverend Byron-Curtiss who was most articulate about the relationship between the fictional Hawk-eye and the actual Foster. In *The Life and Adventures of Nat Foster* (1897), Byron-Curtiss claimed that

> The assumption that Foster is the hero of Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales I think is well founded. I believe the reader will agree with me, that the character of Nat Foster as portrayed by the facts here presented, and the character of Natty Bumppo of Cooper, are wonderfully similar; which, taken with the unbiased opinions of men of Foster's time, are weighty arguments in favor of the idea advanced. (8)

Among these contemporaries of Foster of "unbiased opinions" Bryon-Curtiss included Judge Hurlbut and his son. Byron-Curtiss quotes a letter he received from the latter, which stated:

> James Fenimore Cooper having known Foster in his lifetime (at an early age) it seems not improbable that he took Foster as the original of his famous scout and trapper, commonly called 'Leatherstocking,' or in other words, that 'Nat Foster' and 'Natty Bumppo' were identical. Observe the similarity of description, of manners, habits and person. Dread of the law, and consequent outward conformity; their laughing in an exactly similar manner, without noise; both leaving the state; * * * and through it all, you find points of similarity, hardly the work of chance. After the comparison of the Leatherstocking in the *Pioneers* and the *Deerslayer* with the character of Foster as described by Simms, and there is additional ground for the assertion that they are the same persons; or rather, that Cooper's hero was none other than Nat Foster. (135-136)

Aside from this evidence, Byron-Curtiss also declared that one of Bumppo's adventures related in *The Deerslayer* was an exact description of how Foster rescued two girls from a raging panther, and therefore, concluded to have "every reason to believe that Foster was the identical character used by Cooper" (135). The fact that Foster was "the real deal" of such a heroic literary figure was enough to make the biography worthwhile:

> If my work amounts to nothing more, I will be satisfied, if it develops into a biography of the man who afforded the inspiration to Cooper to write those thrilling and

> fascinating "Leatherstocking Tales," which have delighted and entertained so many of us from our youth even until now. (136)

The dynamics between popular fiction and reality nurture one another. If, as Byron-Curtiss and Hurlbut claimed, Cooper actually did model Bumppo after Foster, then the process of identity becomes one of mimetic complications. For the book, Cooper creates Bumppo as an imitation of Foster; yet for the trial, although the allegation for the defense is the same, the implications reach much further. Hurlbut's claim that Bumppo was based on Foster became a solid justification of the defendant's action in terms of the construction of his character. I do not mean to imply that this was the argumentative platform for the defense, but it certainly aided the image of Foster before the jury and before Judge Denio, who Simms describes as being completely "unbiased" and was determined to proceed "fairly and impartially" (237). In Hurlbut's (and the multitudes') view, Foster had shot Drid on the basis of self-defense (after all, Drid had attempted to stab him on the previous evening and threatened to finish him before Christmas). It was not retaliation, but protection, what Foster had sought. And, if Foster had inspired Cooper's Bumppo, and Bumppo symbolized the honesty, nobility, and innocence of the woodsman, then so must Foster be the model of such a virtuous code of conduct. In addition to this, Cooper had depicted in *The Last of the Mohicans* the tragic, yet inevitable disappearance of the Indian race, a necessary step for progress, as violent and cynical in many of its implications as it was. Foster's self-defense had also been necessary –otherwise he would have been the victim of Drid's passions. On commenting upon Cooper's novels, Winfried Fluck writes that "the ultimate goal of the historical romance [was] to legitimize an established social hierarchy" (427). If Cooper was, therefore, justifying certain historical events (and subsequent casualties through genocide practices), so was *Mohicans* now legitimizing Foster's actions.

In this way, the conventional formulas and archetypes of the fictional, yet familiar and believable world of the popular Leatherstocking Tales had caused the process of mimesis to become one of tautologies, where Foster and Bumppo actually merged for the sake of developing an Adirondack mythistory.

### 4.5.- Marketing the Wilderness: W.H.H. Murray's *Adventures in the Wilderness, or, Camp-Life in the Adirondacks*

Since in the previous item we have considered the power of popular literature over the masses, throughout this item we will attend to how the Adirondacks were publicized through what was notably one of the most prominent bestsellers of the late 1860s, William Henry Harrison Murray's *Adventures in the Wilderness, or, Camp-Life in the Adirondacks* (1869). Undoubtedly, the Leatherstocking figure, as we have seen, became a profitable element for marketing, and romantics throughout the United States were enthused at the possibility of finding a flesh and blood version of the hero they had so thrillingly read about in their youth. But what *Adventures* displayed was an organic system where every element constituting the wilderness (and the entirety of the wilderness itself) was displayed so as to offer the reader, who played the potential visitor, a perfected product. Murray's piece marked the transition from the "golden years" to the Gilded Age of the Adirondacks, and reflected the national craze for the wilderness that developed as a reaction to urban landscapes and industrialism. By the turn of the century, as we have seen in the historical overview, the northern New York

wilderness had become both a "rich man's playground" and a destination for middle-class tourists seeking an escape from the hectic rhythms of city life. It is to the latter group to whom *Adventures* had been directed, not to the wealthier classes, and as we will see, the success of the book inevitably led to a clash between societal groups where the very principles of democracy would be questioned. The overwhelming popularity of the book resulted in a massive surge of visitors to the Adirondacks, to the point where the very wilderness that Murray had been advocating and advertising became seriously threatened. Certainly Murray could not have predicted such a reaction from his readers, and neither was it his objective to overpopulate the forests. His marketing answered more to new religious views (which were highly discordant against traditional church orders) that had been developing through the influence of Romanticism, and to advertising the notion of vacation for the sake of physical and spiritual health.

W.H.H. Murray (1840-1904) had first started publishing short anecdotes of his experiences in the Adirondacks in 1867 in local newspapers. Two years later, a complete book was published, and Murray reached national fame. The book was structured in two parts: in the first section, Murray gave advice regarding fishing, hunting, hiring a guide, travel routes, expenses, proper items to take along to the excursion, and even recommended the sort of attire most suitable for the trip. In the second section, Murray illustrates the kind of adventure the visitor is bound to encounter through a series of short narrations based on his own experiences. While in the first section the characteristic language of consumer culture (or rather, a primitive version of the discourse of consumerism) is more overt and decipherable in its purpose, one should not undermine the subsequent personal narratives, which not only revealed the adventures that visitors would likely encounter if they were to follow Murray's suggestions and directions stipulated in the first part, but also answered to the formulas of popular literature, which, let me remind once more, are intended for the selling of a product.

In his superb essay, "Toward Consumer Culture: 'Adirondack Murray' and the Wilderness Vacation," David Strauss unveils the religious motivations behind *Adventures*. Indeed, it is indispensable to consider Murray's background as part of the Church in order to appreciate the true aim of his writing, as oppose to judging the book only from the perspective of the social phenomenon it created. A native of Guilford, Connecticut, and a Yale graduate, Murray was a minister of the Park Street Congregational Church of Boston. His dissident behavior and methods, especially during the years following the publication of *Adventures*, led him to abandon his calling, towards which he appeared to have never truly displayed absolute commitment. In any case, what is of interest for our consideration of the book is the type of creed in which Murray ardently believed and divulged through his writing. Strauss establishes the term "muscular Christianity" (271) to describe this kind of spiritual methodology initiated in 1850s by Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Edward Everett Hale and expanded by Murray. Muscular Christianity was based on the notion that the body, which houses the soul, is to be kept as healthy and strong as possible. This notion responded to the growing industrialism and urban atmosphere in which the middle class was rising and which not only caused stress and nervous breakdowns, but more importantly, the city became the nucleus of epidemics and slums. Strauss concludes that it is within this context where Murray's advocacy to the middle class to dedicate time for leisure and vacation was an innovation to his predecessors' sermons:

> Diseases such as tuberculosis, yellow fever and cholera devastated urban dwellers in this period while a different kind of devastation was wrought by the rise of illicit forms of entertainment including taverns, whorehouses and some forms of theater which corrupted both body and soul. Preaching against amusements, however, was ineffective in an urban environment where time and money were sufficient; people would seek their pleasures anyway. Accordingly, it was necessary for urban leaders including ministers to address the problem of amusements realistically. By the time Murray reached the pulpit, his predecessors had already proposed city parks, vacations and gymnastics as healthy alternatives to existing amusements. To this list, Murray would add the wilderness vacation, a complex fusion of several current practices. (272)

The reader has probably noticed that the equivalence between physical and mental health echoes transcendentalist correspondences between Matter and Soul. Clearly Romanticism had shifted the importance of the material world, which included nature and the body, to a more notable sphere than the one it had been confined to through strict biblical readings in which the salvation of the soul held the prevalent position. And in the case of other romantics, such as Hoffman and Headley, exercise of the body had been of chief importance as well (let us remember that Headley's first trip to the Adirondacks was on account of his doctor's orders to distance himself from the cityscape for the sake of his mental health). So what was it exactly that made Murray's book so different from *Wild Scenes* or *The Adirondac*? Undoubtedly Hoffman, Headley, and Emerson had publicized the northern wilderness to a great extent, and made it *known* that such a region existed. But in the post Civil War era, what Murray's book provided was a mode of publicizing that was intended to open up the Adirondacks for the public *to visit.* Instead of a poetic translation of transcendentalism with very complex arguments on the notion of progress offered by Emerson, and instead of ambitious, repetitive accounts on the aesthetics of the sublime and the beautiful, such as were presented by Hoffman and Headley, Murray embraced a style and a content that aimed to attract men and women to the Adirondacks for the sake of their own health. It was under the convictions of muscular Christianity that Murray wrote the book: people were asked to take action, to follow the writer's instructions and actually live the experience, while the pleasure of reading was regarded as secondary. Murray strips the language from the heavy ornamental baggage of Romanticism and opts for a clear, direct discourse accessible to everybody. This is not to say that Hoffman's and Headley's books were difficult readings, for they did indeed use a rather simple, available grammatical style. What I mean to imply is that in terms of subject matter and the terminology attached to it, Murray's book is far more reasonable and comprehensible. The difference lies in the target audience: while Emerson, Hoffman and Headley seem to appeal to a more elitist group of readers, one which is familiarized with romantic abstractions of primitiveness, sublimity and beauty, and the question of ethics and progress, Murray's target audience is the entirety of the middle class. In spite of the occasional allusion to scenic beauty and sublimity, comparisons to European landscape, and the notion of the beholder, *Adventures* reveals an early form of advertising discourse both in terms of form and in terms of structure. Though Murray's profits depended on sells and not on actually convincing people to travel to the region, there is still a marketing process in which the product appears to be the wilderness itself. It is a product intended to satisfy and please the consumer, for he or she will undoubtedly be happy to feel how his or her body strength and health are reinvigorated.

Before the publication of *Adventures*, the type of sportsmen who visited the region for leisure were for the most part acknowledged members of society, such as those

belonging to the Adirondack Club which Stillman commemorated in *Philosophers' Camp.* In 1857, for example, the recreational club "Brown's Tract Association" (later to be named "Northwoods Mountain Club") was founded by several notable members of society with the purpose of organizing yearly trips to the wilderness for hunting, fishing, camping, and other activities for male bonding. The club also established the contemplation of beautiful landscapes as one of its purposes, emphasizing the importance of beholding God's natural creations. Clearly, it was publicized under the same terms that transcendentalists and nationalist romanticists had applied to depict the Adirondacks. Moreover, the club captivated people from the same upper class to which the members belonged to. In Grady's words,

> Because of the prominence of the club's charter members and the wholesome, contagious character of its activities, it attracted immediate attention among men who were then identified with important political, business, and professional affairs in and out of the state. Its membership included John A. King, Governor of New York; Thomas G. Alvord (later Lieutenant Governor); Ransom Balcom, Justice of the Supreme Court; Major J.P. Goodsell, William B. Taylor and Silas Seymour, all heads of state departments; Alfred B. Street, for thirty years State Librarian and a poet of current fame, and a number of business and professional men and legislators. During the club's sojourns in the woods, practically all the state's important business, legislative excepted, could have been transacted on the shores of the Fulton Chain. (127-128)

The target audience which Murray addressed was quite different from this description, and although, just like the objectives of the Northwoods Mountain Club, recreation and rest were part of his proposal as well, religious relevance was based on muscular Christianity, not on focusing exclusively on the work of God. Let us consider, therefore, how the wilderness is marketed in the first section of the book, in accordance with both the target audience and the principles of muscular Christianity.

The chapters of the first section are titled as follows: "Why I go to the Wilderness," "Sporting Facilities," "What it costs in the Wilderness," "Outfit," "Where to buy Tackle," "Guides," "How to get to the Wilderness," "Hotels," "When to visit the Wilderness," "Healthfulness of Camp Life," "What Sections of the Wilderness to visit," "Black Flies," "Mosquitoes," "Ladies' Outfit," "Wild Animals," "Provisions," and "Bill of Fare." As can be expected, each of the chapters consists of a series of recommendations regarding each specific topic. These suggestions provide, on the one hand, an image of the Adirondacks where even the frailest of individuals can relax and enjoy a pleasurable journey, and on the other, a series of do-it-yourself steps to become a fit an adequate sportsman. All in all, these instructions induced the reader to believe that, because the wilderness was not as hostile nor camping as strenuous as they had believed, and because successful hunting and fishing seemed to mainly depend on using the best and the right kind of equipment, the visitor could passively enjoy his or her vacation.

"Why I go to the Wilderness" marks the tone of muscular Christianity most vividly. Murray presents wilderness as a healer and as a space that men and women of the city ought to visit temporarily and consistently. In other words, he celebrates the notion of vacationing for mental and physical restoration; the wilderness is not to be considered as a permanent space in which to settle, but as a transitional cure guaranteeing absolute improvements which will maintain the individual strong and healthy once he or she

returns to urban life. It was Murray's assertion that in the Adirondacks patients and victims of illnesses that were spreading in the cities could recuperate:

> I deem the excursion eminently adapted to restore impaired health. Indeed, it is marvellous what benefit physically is often derived from a trip of a few weeks to these woods. To such as are afflicted with that dire parent of ills, dyspepsia, or have lurking in their system consumptive tendencies, I most earnestly recommend a month's experience among the pines. The air which you there inhale is such as can be found only in high mountainous regions, pure, rarefied, and bracing. The amount of venison steak a consumptive will consume after a week's residence in that appetizing atmosphere is a subject of daily and increasing wonder . . . The spruce, hemlock, balsam, and pine, which largely compose this wilderness, yield upon the air, and especially at night, all their curative qualities. (11-12)

Murray added that he had actually witnessed a young man whose doctors had given him only a short time to live improve "with wonderful rapidity" (13) in the Adirondacks. According to the writer, "the wilderness received him almost a corpse," but returned him to the city a "happy and healthy" (14) man. It is important to notice that Murray often times stresses his position as a witness of events so as to communicate to his readers that he is a reliable source. Of course, this is a discursive strategy in order to maintain the authority of the narrator intact, so as to convince his readers. Phrases such as "this is no exaggeration" (11) or "I feel . . . that I am able to speak from experience" (15) reduce the distance between writer and reader; the narrator becomes an entity of confidence, a voice who would not dare to betray the reader's innocence.

This emphasis on the narrator as an omnipotent presence is maintained throughout the book, and the rest of the subject matters arrayed in the first section are no less vulnerable to its tone. In "Sporting Facilities," for example, Murray reasons his way into creating an idyllic image of the Adirondacks for the reader. He contends that the forests make up a pristine wilderness where "no axe has sounded," hence providing the perfect environment "away from all the businesses and cares of civilized life" (17). He continues through inductive pretenses by claiming that the trip does not have to be strenuous if one does not desire it to be. Resorting once again to his own experiences and preferences so as to verify the truth of his statement, he confesses to have "no special love for labor" and to abhor "tramping" (18). But of course this does not cause him any troubles because no actual physical exercise is required if he does not want to:

> If you wish to go one or ten miles for a "fish," your guide paddles you to the spot, and serves you while you handle the rod. This takes from recreation every trace of toil. You have all the excitement of sporting, without any attending physical weariness. (18)

This excerpt is highly significant because it stands as an exemplary embryo of the discourse used for marketing in contemporary consumer society. First of all, the idea of commodity is used to tempt a potential consumer. The guide "serves" the client so as to avoid any situation or activity that is either strenuous or boring. Secondly, Murray touches upon one of the most powerful baiting techniques for consumerism: the illusion of an experience becomes better than the actual version of it. Sporting is stripped from the more tiring, boring nuisances but retains all excitement because it is molded so as to satisfy the client, who enjoys it just as much (or even more) than performing all the activities that such a sport entails. This idea sets the precedent to today's general preference for the illusion of nature rather than actually experiencing, or even contacting it. Under the power of modern technology, television and the internet

provide the consumer with a virtual image of a splendorous landscape that is deemed just as "real as the real thing." Why actually visit the Grand Canyon when I can see how beautiful it is in the comfort of my own couch? And even camera shots and angles are probably better and more picturesque than the view I would get being there, which would only be limited to my scope. Why go to play tennis when I can just push the start button in my Wii and play in my own living room? The videogame version of tennis is actually more appealing because it does not require me to run as much as in an actual game, or even make arrangements for a match. Illusion and commodity, therefore, maintain a symbiotic relationship in marketing language, to the extent that the distorted impression of wilderness, or sporting activities, reach the level of reality in the mind of the consumer.

I have mentioned above the interesting conception of the guide as a servant, that is, as a chief figure in ensuring the commodity of the client. If Hoffman and Headley had attended to the mythical qualities of the Adirondack guide through Cheney and Sabattis, now Murray characterizes them not just as the safeguard for the client's leisure, but as an actual product in themselves. In "Guides," Murray displays the types of guides the consumer is likely to encounter: the "witty guide," the "talkative guide," or the "lazy guide," depending on their personality traits, or the "independent guide" and the "hotel guide" depending on whether they work for themselves or for a business. As if exhibiting branded products, Murray concludes that the first three types are all faulty and are "hindrances to a party's happiness" (35). The witty guide is "forever talking" and "thrusting himself impertinently forward," and therefore the client should "avoid him as [he] would the plague" (33). The client should as well "beware" from the talkative guide because of his vice for "bragging" (34). And finally, the lazy guide is "the most vexatious creature" because he is a malfunctioning product in the sense that he does not live up to the expectancies of the client, who bargained for a "quick, inventive, and energetic" (34) man, just like Natty Bumppo was. Murray opts for the independent guides, who are bound to remain true to what the client expects of an Adirondack guide, for they are "models of skill, energy, and faithfulness" (35). The hotel guide, on the other hand, is bound to displease the client because of the very circumstances of his job: as an employee, he loses a great part of the responsibility to satisfy the customer because he knows that he is only part of the product, not the complete package. Moreover, Murray implies that this agreement between a business and an employee often derives in a downfall of the guide's character:

> [The hotel guide] has no reputation to make, as has the independent guide, for his service is secured to him for the season, by virtue of his connection with the hotel. Furthermore, the "hotel guide" is often unemployed for weeks if the season is dull; and, hanging around a frontier hotel in daily proximity to the bar, is very liable to beget that greatest of all vices in a guide –*drunkenness.* (36)

However superficially analytical and capitalist as Murray may sound by classifying guides as if they were products, he was not wrong in his distinction between independent and hotel guides in terms of their expertise and dedication to the party. In his 1994 history of Adirondack guides, Brumley makes such a distinction as well, and the fact remains that in the interest of making money, hotel businesses often hired "young inexperienced guides" under the assumption that "a dissatisfied customer would be replaced the next day or week with a new unsuspecting one" (Brumley, 18). Today, as customers, we also expect what we have bargained for and appeal to our customer's rights if we feel that we have been cheated in any way. What is interesting about the

quote from *Adventures* above is the notable transitory state between consumer and Victorian values. Under the characteristic reasoning of commercialism, Murray claims that a faulty product should be avoided. In regards to the irremediably witty, talkative, and lazy guides, he had previously advised the reader to "post [the guide] *by name* on your way out, at every camp and hotel, as an imposition and a pest" (35). This would "make an example of one or two, and the rest would take the hint" (35), and would allow the client's conscience to "have peace" (35) because he has committed a morally just duty. Such action attests to Murray's belief that a consumer has rights, and that these rights are measured by moral parameters. Moreover, there is an underlying assumption that consumers, as a homogeneous group, have the common objective of improving a product, so that the next consumer in line will benefit from a better version of the product. Now, in the same way that Murray connects a consumer's rights and his responsibilities towards the rest of the consumers to his moral health, that is, his peace of mind, so does he connect the hotel guide's employment situation to his moral character and vices. This level of morality is not only due to Murray's position as a minister, but also to the reminiscences of Victorian values which had strictly stipulated adequate behaviors and conducts that conduced to the immaculateness and decency of the individual. It is no wonder, therefore, that Murray is skeptical of the corporative system governing in the relationship between the hotel, the hotel guide, and the customer. Today we generally prefer to rely on a corporation as customers because we feel that our rights are more carefully protected and we have blind confidence in a business which has been franchised, for this means that previous customers have felt satisfied, which guarantees our contentment with the product. But Murray, holding on to the religious and Victorian convictions of his time, was distrustful of a mediator between customer and product. The hotel broke the honest relationship between guide and sportsman, for it was corrupted by interests and money.

Murray understood that consumers, as a group, mainly belonged to the growing American middle class and refused to limit the Adirondacks to the needs and desires of the rich and to notable figures of society. As I have mentioned earlier in this item, the fact that his target audience was the middle class derived in a more democratic appreciation of the wilderness. Murray identifies and places himself as part of the group to which his readers belong to, and as such, all suggestions and recommendations displayed throughout the first section are addressed to their needs and their possibilities. His adversity towards upper-class privileges is made clear in his allusions to the ethics of sportsmanship. Murray claims that a true sportsman's duty must answer to moral judgment: no matter how much the sportsman may enjoy hunting or fishing, and no matter his socioeconomic background, he is "not to kill more than the camp can eat" (20). However, he is of the opinion that the solution of game laws does not in any way benefit the middle class. Rather than a regulation favoring the upper class, he proposes fines that would be equally applied to everybody:

> I am not in favor of "game laws," passed for the most part in the interest of the few and the rich, to the deprivation of the poor and the many, but I would that fine and imprisonment both might be the punishment of him who, in defiance of every humane instinct and reverential feeling, out of mere love for "sport," as some people are pleased to call it, directs a ball or hooks a fish when no necessity demands it. Such ruthless destruction of life is *slaughter*, -coarse, cruel, unjustifiable butchery. (20-21)

In the upcoming item we will attend to additional views regarding game laws; views which were very popular especially among year-round Adirondackers. But for now, the

reader should keep in mind that the friction between social classes was increasingly becoming a problem towards the end of the nineteenth century, and that wilderness, as a space, often emphasized upon class differences by the very circumstances of its nature. Murray, in his belief that the wilderness is to be enjoyed and used by all citizens–although this is only partly true, for his sole focus on the middle class leaves the lower classes out of the target audience–provides information of all sorts that is of interest for potential *consumers*, not for the wealthy who want sole custody of the wilderness in order to exercise their privileges. He manages to market the Adirondacks in such a way that not only comfort may be guaranteed, but that the vacationer may spend as little money as possible on the trip. In "Where to buy Tackle," for example, he recommends stores in New York City and in Boston where the customer may buy good-quality gear as cheaply as possible; in "What it costs in the Wilderness" he informs the reader of estimate, reasonable prices (always as cheap as possible) for each of the expenses he may encounter; in "Guides" he lists the names of several trustworthy independent guides that will ensure that the client receives his money's worth; and in "How to get to the Wilderness" he describes the advantages and disadvantages of certain routes. Notice how the following excerpt on an itinerary from the city to the Adirondacks by train and steamboat transportation resembles today's travel agency advertisements:

> This is the shortest, easiest, and beyond all odds, the best route to the Adirondacks. You leave Boston or New York Monday at 8 A.M., and reach your guide Tuesday at 5 P.M. So perfect are the connections on this route, that, having engaged "John" to meet me a year from a certain day, at 5 P.M., on the Lower Saranac, I have rolled up to "Martin's" and jumped from the coach as the faithful fellow, equally "on time," was in the act of pulling his narrow boat up the beach. It is not only easy and quick, but the cheapest route also, and takes you through some of the sublimest scenery in the world. (42-43)

In other words, what the route supplies is the best quality for the lowest price. Part of the nature of marketing also includes making sure that the consumer feels that he has control over the product. If Murray gives several options regarding possible stores or routes it is not only to afford the consumer the most convenient possibilities for him, but to imply that he is to *choose* from these lists of possibilities and that therefore he has control, and hence power, over the product. In the previous quote Murray has once again placed himself in the position of the consumer to relate how uncomplicated his trip was. His guide, John Plumbley, is obviously part of the list of reliable guides, and it is significant that he writes "John" and "Martin's" between quotes. He is trying to give the impression that these names are actually blank spaces which the consumer has the right and the power to fill in. The idea of "this could be you" is flexible to the extent that the consumer is the one who in the end determines the variables of the trip so that the vacation may be as fitting and as becoming to each separate individual. Thus, all suggestions and recommendations are based not only on "how to" tips and instructions, but on "do-it-yourself" guarantees as well.

*Adventures* also opened up to another social sector: middle-class women. Until the success of Murray's book, women for the most part did not benefit from wilderness excursions and camping; much less from the activities of sportsmanship, deemed as masculine. We have seen how no women were included in the Adirondack Club, and the list of men forming the Northwoods Club evidences how the custody of nature was relegated to men. One of the members of the Northwoods Club, Alfred B. Street, stated in a celebrative note the following:

> The Ladies: Barred out of the forest by vindictive crinoline. We miss their presence there, but we see their bright glances in the glowing sky of morning. We hear their voices in the music of the woodland bird, and inhale their sweet breath in the fragrant zephyrs of the silent woods. (Quoted in Grady, 135)

It is not surprising to find that in the age of Romanticism women were associated to the beautiful features of nature. As an aesthetic category that aroused calmness, delicacy, and harmony, beauty was deemed as effeminate as opposed to the powerful sense of astonishment and awe that sublimity entailed. Women, therefore, were barred out of sporting clubs which attended to the importance of male bonding, and the void of their absence was filled in by club members through the beauty of nature. Murray, however, proclaimed the Adirondacks as a vacation spot from which women had the right to benefit as well, and several references to the "ladies" are meant to encourage them to participate for the sake of their own mental and physical health. There is a limit to Murray's "openness," however, and although muscular Christianity was also to be exercised by the weaker sex, this had to be done at a much more docile level. The image of women as frail, delicate objects unable to overcome the arduous and demanding work that camp life required is still very much present in *Adventures*. Notice how in spite of his incentive to bring ladies to the Adirondacks, Murray maintains the association between beauty and women intact on the basis of their common delicateness:

> In beauty of scenery, in health-giving qualities, in the easy and romantic manner of its sporting, it *is* a paradise, and so will it continue to be while a deer leaves his track upon the shore of its lakes, or a trout shows himself above the surface of its waters. It is this peculiarity also which makes an excursion to this section so easy and delightful to ladies. There is nothing in the trip which the most delicate and fragile need fear. And it is safe to say, that, of all who go into the woods, none enjoy the experiences more than ladies, and certain it is that none are more benefited by it. (19)

Additional remarks regarding the frailty of women are kept throughout the book, only to repeatedly profess that the trip can be made as comfortable as a woman may need. Murray dedicates a short chapter to suggest the proper attire for women, and in "Healthfulness of Camp Life" he appeases his readers by claiming that ladies would not catch a cold and need not suffer from "physical exertion" (50) in the wilderness.

The second section of the book, as I have stated above, consists of a series of sketches in which the narrator relates his experiences in the Adirondacks. Although generally this section has been regarded with minor interest by critics, a word should be said on its implications from a marketing perspective. Structurally, as the follow-up to the instructive information given in the first section, these sketches reflect the success of camp life if the consumer is to follow the given steps. We turn to the pragmatic side of the instructions, and in another projection of the idea that "this could be you," Murray suggests that prosperity–in terms of physical and mental recovery, enjoyment, leisure, observation of God's works, and meditation–is assured. Moreover, this assurance is aided by the fact that the second section in many ways answers to the formulaic conventions of popular literature, which we have analyzed in the previous item. Though the presence of a hero is not invoked, Murray draws from the different formulas regarding plot and tone which appeal to the reader, who becomes immersed in the stories. Elements regarding several popular fiction genres are peppered in the different narrations; to give a few examples, "Running the Rapids" is filled with the thrill of adventure, "Phantom Falls" revolves around the mystery of an Indian ghost, "Jack-Shooting in a Foggy Night" is a mixture of action and comedy, and "A Ride with a Mad

Horse in a Freight Car" uses metanarrative layers and draws upon more nostalgic and sentimental tones. In terms of the narrative style, Terrie notes that "Murray wrote a simple, forthright, vigorous prose and avoided the excessive ornateness that the modern reader often finds so cloying in romantics" (1985: 70). Indeed, this style was symptomatic of new narrative trends in popular fiction. Partly because of the accelerating tempos of urban life rhythms as a result of industrialism (especially regarding transportation), partly because of the growing presence of women in the public sphere, and partly because of the transition from traditional Victorian values to consumerism, popular fiction was slowly ridding itself from the ornamentation and pomposity that for example characterized the Leatherstocking series. (By the end of the nineteenth century, popular novels revolving around heroes would manifest a more austere narrative style away from excessive romanticist embellishments, a style born out of the type of aesthetic entertainment that the new society was demanding.) Murray's book represents this middle ground between not only literary, but cultural eras, with an endeavor to push towards and embrace the future.

The social repercussion that *Adventures* had is typical of consumer culture as well. The book became an instant bestseller in the spring of 1869; it was on the shelves of sport stores and station shops everywhere and was continually being reprinted throughout the subsequent months of its publication. Hundreds of tourists swarmed to the northern woods, book in hand, equipped as Murray had instructed and ready to follow his advice religiously. The sociological phenomenon was to be known as "Murray's Rush," and soon enough, when the gullible and naïve tourists found out that things were not as easy, nor as comfortable, nor as becoming as Murray had promised, journalists quickly dubbed them "Murray's Fools." The famed writer was from then on to be known as "Adirondack Murray," and the book backfired with tremendous hostility. Tuberculosis patients discovered that no miraculous recovery was to happen for them; men looking for relaxation and minimum effort found themselves having to work harder and more strenuously than they had anticipated; black flies, which Murray had described as "the most harmless and the least vexatious of the insect family" (56) were a continual pest; the gear they had bought did not make them better sportsmen; and many were being cheated by some of the honest, independent guides that Murray had recommended. Needless to say, the comfortable, paradisiac, natural sanatorium designed for the ladies generally did not please middle-class women. The summer following the book's publication, Wachusset, a correspondent for the Boston *Daily Advertiser* wrote:

> I think I have known ladies who would not enjoy, even in the same array, crossing a carry in a rain storm, face and hands dripping with tar and oil, mosquito bites smarting on wrists and temples, the boots soaked through and through, the reserve stockings in the carpet bag equally wet, guide and escort so loaded with boat and baggage as to be incapable of rendering assistance, and a slippery log tempting to a tumble into a shallow pool with a muddy bottom. Ladies who can pass such an ordeal without a loss of temper which would make all its evils tenfold worse can safely make their plans for the Adirondacks. (170)

Murray was not without a few defenders, however. The same summer in which Wachusset parodied the back-to-nature craze that *Adventures* had caused, journalist Kate Field published an article in the New York *Daily Tribune* called "Murray Vindicated" in which she criticized the exaggerated and extremist reaction that seekers of health were having against the bestselling author:

> Certainly Mr. Murray never dreamed of such results, or he would have walked through a fiery furnace before giving to the public his impressions of wood life . . . If consumptives with both legs in the grave visit the Adirondacks, and after a few days or weeks leave the woods somewhat less alive than when they entered, surely their friends display the most extraordinary absence of reason in attributing their decease to Murray's book. Yet this is being done. Several persons have come here, in a dying condition, and have died, whereupon relatives and lookers on have denounced Mr. Murray in most offensive language. Newspaper writers multiply two or three dead men by a fertile imagination, and produce "numbers of dead and dying." Such criticism is outrageous, and such reports are willfully malignant. (80-81)

*"Murray's Fools" from Harpers Weekly. Courtesy of the Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake.*

In spite of the disappointment that the readers of *Adventures* felt once they reached the northern wilderness, floods of tourists did not cease to arrive to the Adirondacks, fomenting the construction of multiple hotels and a railroad from Saratoga Springs to North Creek. More than thirty years after the publication, Harry V. Radford, founder and editor of *Woods and Water*, published a biographical appreciation of Murray in which through the consideration of the Adirondacks' quality as a summer resort, he noted the irony of the criticism Murray had received:

> How strange it seems to us to-day, looking at the mammoth hotels and thousands of cottages and camps, which accommodate a quarter of a million visitors each summer in the Adirondacks, that Murray's delightful revelation of the woods and wood-life *was not believed!* (20)

Terrie and Strauss point out another effect that "Murray's Rush" had on the region, and for which the author was also reprimanded. Along with the lumbering industry, the overwhelming amount of visitors became a serious threat to the wilderness which

Murray had so ardently defended, and "within a few years, critics were complaining of the denuded forests and the decline of fish and wildlife" (Strauss, 282). These denunciations had in fact more to do with the spoiling of upper-class sportsmen's activities and year-round Adirondackers' need of resource supplies than with an actual preservationist preoccupation to save the wilderness for its own sake. In other words, it was a matter of conservationism for utilitarian purposes that ignited very heated attacks on Murray, especially, as Terrie points out, by Thomas Bangs Thorpe and Charles Dudley Warner. The latter wrote several pieces for *Harper's Weekly* and *Atlantic Monthly*, and was recurrently vocal about the hazards that "Murray's Fools" were bringing to the wilderness. Warner overtly revealed the elitism implicit in many of the experienced sportsmen's views:

> The instinct of barbarism that leads people periodically to throw aside the habits of civilization, and seek the freedom and discomfort of the woods, is explicable enough; but it is not so easy to understand why this passion should be strongest in those who are most refined, and most trained in intellectual and social fastidiousness. Philistinism and shoddy do not like the woods, unless it becomes fashionable to do so; and then, as speedily as possible, they introduce their artificial luxuries, and reduce the life in the wilderness to the vulgarity of a well-fed picnic . . . The real enjoyment of camping and tramping in the woods lies in a return to primitive conditions of lodging, dress, and food, in as total an escape as may be from the requirements of civilization. And it remains to be explained why this is enjoyed most by those who are most highly civilized. (66-67)

Warner was holding on to the romanticist values that had brought the most "refined" and the most "civilized" back to nature in the first place. A nostalgia for escapism and primitiveness permeated the opinions of all those who had been part of the golden years of the Adirondacks. These values, however, were to inevitably succumb to the devouring dynamics of consumer culture. Moreover, this elitist proclamation in which the privileges of the few and the rich were being reinstated clashed deeply against Murray's unyielding, democratic stance. Where Warner was convinced that middle-class tourists were exploitatively using and destroying nature, Murray and his advocates believed such an attitude was an outrageous assault to the founding principles of the nation. In Terrie's words, "because of their patronizing tone, those horrified by Murray's Fools were seen to be espousing an essentially un-American position" (1985: 76).

Murray's *Adventures in the Wilderness* has gone down in environmental history as a transparent reflection of the ideological and economic shift that was taking place all over the country, and which clearly left its marks on the wilderness. The book anticipated consumer culture in terms of its style, structure, and content just as much as it did in terms of how it was received and reviewed. Simply put, what occurred was that consumers were not satisfied with the product because the advertisement created a completely different image of the wilderness than what it actually was. Throughout the following decades, continual and growing tourism to natural areas intensified the aggravations against landscapes, biodiversity, water resources, and of course, against romantic dogmas of spirituality and aesthetics. In only a few years and in a similar twist of irony, the automobile, which became the ultimate symbol of democracy, allowed everyone to go back to nature if only for a while, but in the process, destroyed and polluted the same wilderness which vacationers sought, scraping the "integrity" of nature.


*Poster summarizing the social upheaval caused by Adventures in the Wilderness. Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake.*

## 4.6.- Portraits, Notes, and Recollections on the Adirondacks at the Turn of the Century: Arpad Geyza Gerster and Reverend Byron-Curtiss

The aftermath of "Murray's Fools" and the railroad construction brought new socioeconomic issues into the Adirondacks. As tourism was steadily revealing itself as the most promising source of income, legislative measures to satisfy tourists' needs were adopted at the expense of the locals' necessities. Adding to tourism, conservation and land ethics were becoming capital concerns among politicians and the educated classes, and decisions that affected the traditional lifestyle of rural communities were often met with hostility, threats, and vandalism. As we have seen at the conclusion of the previous item, the very definition of democracy was at stake, and the volatility with which it was preached and practiced only made it a more relative concept. The 1890s marked the end of the frontier; the characteristic American space that had broken the ties with European tradition and bred democracy through the sheer experience of pioneers and settlers was now a story of the past. "The frontier has gone," announced Frederick Jackson Turner, "and with its going has closed the first period of American history" (525). Little time was given to obituaries and lamentations; the question was now how to manage and make the most of the territories in the upcoming century. In the Adirondacks, a region which still maintained many traditional qualities of the frontier

life, the struggle between old and new ways generated a new archetypical Adirondacker that distanced itself from the mystified self-made man of the romanticist era. While images of guides as Natty Bumppos were maintained as tourist attractions, there emerged several writers depicting guides, hermits, lumbermen, and townspeople from a realistic point of view that appealed to the human qualities of the settlers, delivering them from the pantheon of heroes to the real-life wonders and limits of human existence.

In this item, we shall consider the writings of Dr. Arpad Geyza Gerster (1848-1923) and Reverend Arthur Leslie Byron-Curtiss (1871-1959) as representative texts portraying Adirondackers from this newer realistic prism. (Readers who are minimally familiar with Adirondack literary history might notice the notable absence in this item of Jeanne Robert Foster, one of the most salient writers and poets to use Adirondack folk as a recurrent subject matter. Because her writing raises very interesting questions and issues regarding class, gender, and the modernist division between high art and popular culture, I have deemed it best to include her in the Scholars' Debate section, item 6.)

Through the writings of Gerster and Byron-Curtiss, the reader is enmeshed in the confrontations brought on by policies biased by tourism and conservation ethics, and in the social friction developing between locals and William West Durant, the magnate who initiated the development of great camps in the region. From Gerster we will attend to his *Notes Collected in the Adirondacks (1895 & 1896)*, an amalgamation of sketches, anecdotes, and reflections that the physician wrote down as memoirs. In spite of the quality of the text as a historical document and as a vivid narrative of the complicated years toward the turn of the century, the notes were kept in their original format for several decades by Gerster's son, John, and from 1980 onwards they remained at the Adirondack Museum. It was thanks to Sidney S. Whelan, Jr. and Alice Wolf Gilborn that the notes were finally published in 2005, along with the illustrations and sketches that the multitalented Gerster drew in the pages. (For more on the editing and publication of *Notes* see the interview with Alice Wolf Gilborn in item 4.8. of this section.) From Byron-Curtiss, we will consider excerpts from the collection made by William J. O'Hern under the title *Adirondack Stories of the Black River Country.* Byron-Curtiss published *The Life and Adventures of Nat Foster* (1897) and *The Story of a Pass in the Mountains* (1917), but a great deal of his work had been forgotten until O'Hern discovered and recovered manuscripts, camp journals, and other primary documents and collected them in *Adirondack Stories.* O'Hern also included previously published pieces (such as the one on the naturalist John Burroughs, which first appeared in *Audubon Magazine* in 1959). Since O'Hern took the liberty of going beyond plain editing and actually rewrote some of Byron-Curtiss's pieces (he admits to even invoking occasional imaginary dialogues), the reader will find O'Hern as the author of *Adirondack Stories* in the Works Cited section. As a result, the very vibrant and vigorous personality of Byron-Curtiss comes completely through; his sense of humor, his articulate stance against the elitism of game laws and seasons, and his personal descriptions of Adirondack characters are uniformly maintained throughout the text with the freshness and spontaneity of the same literary style that once revived Nat Foster, and that O'Hern masterfully manages to stay true to. *Adirondack Stories* gathers material extending from Byron-Curtiss's first contact with the upstate wilderness in 1892, as the leader of the Christ Episcopal Church of the town of Forestport, to the last years of his life. The reader is able to grasp different stages of the pastor's maturity:

from the young, persistent yet naïve clergyman to the father and political activist who in his own way fought for the liberties of south-western Adirondackers.

One of the most interesting things when considering Gerster and Byron-Curtiss side by side is how their appreciations of the wilderness, though initially alike (they were both nature lovers, heirs to the principles of muscular Christianity, and they took notable pleasure in experiencing solitude in the wilderness, testing themselves against nature through sport, and observing the behavior and physical traits of animal species), they tend to diverge when considering the societal friction between classes. Neither of the writers fit into the easily-identifiable characteristics of "Murray's Fools," for they both became skilled in the crafts of the backwoods life. Neither do they initially differ in terms of their appreciation for the Adirondack folk nor in terms of their fondness toward regional stories. But considering their different social statuses, they are bound to disagree in their uses of the wilderness and on how they deemed themselves with and against other inhabitants of the Adirondacks.

Gerster, who migrated from Hungary to America in 1874, was a prominent physician in New York City. He seems to have been cultivated in various art forms –aside from his apparently innate ability to learn and express himself in other languages, he played the organ, had a critical ear for classical music, and was talented in drawing and sketching. His passion for reading the classics appears again and again in his diary, from his evocation of the *Odyssey* and the works of Thucydides to the notes dedicated to Dante's *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, and he was also a member of the American Folklore Society. To his camp, Oteetiwi, in Raquette Lake, he brought his maid and his cook to assist his wife and his son. Among his friends were the Austro-Hungarian Consul of New York and his wife, the Baroness von Leonhardt, who was a guest at Oteetiwi, and more importantly, William West Durant. Although Gerster showed genuine respect for local Adirondackers and sought their company during his monthly retreats to Oteetiwi in the springtime and the summer, he never rejected the privileges stemming from his upper middle-class status and even less did he decline the favors and advantages that his friendship with Durant afforded.

Byron-Curtiss, on the other hand, lacked such a prestigious social position. His work as the Forestport clergyman (where he travelled only two days after being ordained in St. Paul's Church of Syracuse), and his subsequent habitation of the Nat Foster Lodge, which he purchased, gradually converted him into one of the area's town folk. From his first months at Forestport it seems clear that this is what he strove for: he worked to improve his backwoodsman skills–deeply enjoying the process along the way–and he made it a point to mingle with all kinds of people, from the town physician, Dr. Kilbourn, and the lumbermen to Charley O'Connor, the local barman. Those he found disagreeable he spoke about in a humorous tone characteristic of town gossip, and he never hesitated to make fun of himself just as much. For the most part, it is fair to say that he earned the respect of those he met, and life-lasting friendships developed. In quite a number of sketches he uses meta-narrative techniques that reveal his own nostalgia for years past and a palpable happiness to have been part of that Adirondack community.

As part of the gentry, Gerster never truly blended in with the locals. This is not to say that he did not bond with them: the guide and hermit Alvah Dunning was one of his closest Adirondack friends and he performed a number of favors for him. With his

guide, Charley Jones, who usually took care of Oteetiwi while he was in New York, he maintained an affectionate relationship. He was also kind and attentive with patients. As Craig Gilborn points out in the introduction, "[Gerster] rejected their offers to pay, which they invariably tried to do. Their effusive thanks were waved away, partly because it embarrassed him but also because he did not want to be the object of attention. Their stories, he said, were payment enough" (xiv). But Gerster always seems to maintain the distance with the townsfolk in some way. His cultivated background provided him with an intellect that he most likely identified as superior. He was certainly not vocal about it (not even in his private notes), but the fact that he benefitted from the sporting opportunities that his friendship with Durant provided was, in a way, an unhesitant manner of acknowledging and accepting privileges which most locals could not aspire to. Byron-Curtiss, on the other hand, does not hesitate to side with the locals when it comes to the struggle against Adirondack League Club policies, and he often broke game and season laws and covered for others who did the same. He explains the reasons for his position frequently, arguing against the privileges of private club members (see item 3.3. of this section for the origin of private preserves and clubs). It is true that *Notes* only collects Gerster's experiences in 1895 and 1896, while *Adirondack Stories* spans for about sixty years, and that therefore, comparisons seem rather unfair considering the maturation of a writer. It is unlikely however, that Gerster ever disregarded his cultivated background from being superior.

Interestingly enough, Gerster does note his critical views on his own social class, which sheds light on his ambivalent feelings toward his place in a wilderness that was at the time labelled "a rich man's playground." Notice how in the following excerpt, in spite of participating in the society of Echo Camp, one of the Adirondack great camps, he displays a behavior inconsistent with the formalities typical of his class:

> Madam [Gerster's wife] & I went to call on Governor & Mrs. Lounsbury at Echo Camp. There was company, and the men were at a game of poker, which we interrupted. Mrs. L. Appeared, and there was the usual tittle-tattle & small talk for about 20 minutes, after which we departed. We paid our last visit before this in 1893, the Lounsburys returned it in 1894, and now in 1895 we reciprocated. This should not be looked upon as a reflection either upon us, or the L's, who are very estimable people; but it means simply that we don't come to the woods with the intention of much social entertainment. Some of our neighbors have introduced the American system of gadding about, and never being without "company." From the first we have resolutely declined to be drawn into this vortex of unrest & tedium, and are therefore considered to be "stuck up." (45-46)

Indeed, Gerster was not one to get too carried away by upper-class social norms, and neither was he mesmerized by the opulence and grandeur exhibited at the great camps. His own Adirondack home, Oteetiwi, was fairly small and therefore intentionally inconvenient for accommodating more than two or three guests. His choices in decoration were also simple and rustic, for such was the style he deemed fit for a camp in the wilderness. Gerster's reflections on tasteful decorations are significant. The following is a passage in which he describes Covey's, in Big Moose Lake:

> The place consisted of a group of six or seven prettily and appropriately designed rustic cottages, picturesquely grouped upon a series of bold crags. What may be called the landscape gardening of the plot, was managed with remarkable good taste and with an evident object as to the picturesque. (131)

The picturesque qualities produced "a charming effect against the background of the dark forest" (131). On the inside, Covey's maintained the same pleasurable effect:

> Supper was abundant, excellent, and served in a very tasteful dining room finished in rough sawn timber, which as the case shows, can be managed to great artistic advantage by one having good taste. The decorations of simple pictures and deerheads, and colored foliage and plenty of ferns on the cleanly tables also showed remarkable good taste, in pleasing contrast to the plastered paint & varnish –daubed, or papered abominations usually met with here about either in the abodes of the natives, or in the camps of the city barbarians. Razing the ground of all timber & shrubbery, making "a lawn" with straight walks, putting up a hideous "villa" with painted woodwork, plaster, ugly wallpapers and detestable factory made furniture inside, comprises the idea of the "beautiful" to the average American. (132)

Though in this excerpt he also denounces the bad taste of locals, as I mentioned earlier, Gerster is for the most part inarticulate in his critical view toward them. In any case, it is the upper-class which is the greater target of his attack. In the end, Gerster does not identify himself with the lifestyle of the millionaires who made the Adirondacks their vacationing destination. He benefited from their company and the advantages they could provide; but just as his cultivated background renders him as superior to locals, so does it place him at a higher level in contrast to the millionaires. Adirondack plutocrats had come across great fortunes either through business opportunities or through inheritances (this was the case with William West Durant). But "taste" was bred through cultural sensibility, which Gerster clearly possessed and he knew it. Intellect and aesthetic sensibility are what in the end Gerster valued, and this belief placed him in a superior position to both locals and millionaires in terms of how he regarded himself. Socially speaking, he maintained a middle ground, mingling with the backwoodsman and the plutocrat with the aim of creating for himself the ideal experience of wilderness retreat for a man of his unique cultural disposition.

Taste in decoration, of course, was never an issue of interest for Byron-Curtiss. Though occasional commentaries on the beauty and picturesque quality of a certain scenery may appear, his personal digressions do not reveal aesthetic concerns. Keeping each of the writers' class status in mind, let us take a look at their characterization of the wilderness and the Adirondack folk.

Gerster and Byron-Curtiss dedicated many passages to the description of locals. In a catalog-like fashion, the result is a wide array of folks making a living in the wilderness through the use of its resources. These characterizations are spontaneous, often consisting of just a few lines that gather the writer's impressions on a certain person's speech, dress, or behavior. The portraits appear scattered, and are never the incentive to pass a moral judgement, but seem, rather, to be purposely descriptive with the aim of illustrating the lifestyle of the peoples inside the Adirondacks. On a trip that may take several days, Gerster, for example, may note the polite manner of a guide indicating the route, the aim of a hunter, an update on a patient's treatment, and the beauty and discipline implicit in the craft of a carpenter or a trapper. In a similar line, through the retelling of anecdotes and experiences, Byron-Curtiss may note the shy and quiet manner of a woodsman, the work ethic of the lumbermen (Foresport was a lumbering town), the annoying temperament of the church organist, the foul language of a patient he aided when assisting the town physician, the cocky yet harmless attitude of the barman, the skilful way in which a crippled man would handle himself in the woods, or

the tendency to exaggerate of a certain local when recounting the old days. Through these small commentaries and allusions, both writers unintentionally produced a eulogy of the traditional life in the Adirondacks. Their records are particularly significant considering the rapid changes that the Adirondacks were going through in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Not only the railroad, but the entrance of the automobile, the telephone and the telegraph was speedily altering relationships between rural communities, bringing the Adirondacks into the world of modern communication and technology. Through Gerster's and Byron-Curtiss's portraits, the reader can glimpse the last vestiges of a way of life that was near extinction, one which some locals were reluctant to let go of, while others welcomed the new era. The shift towards progress was not lost on neither of the writers. In one passage, Gerster, for instance, laments what the Adirondack guide had been reduced to: a mere tourist attraction. As a result, as I explained in items 4.4. and 4.5. of this section, inexperienced men, unable to live up to the name of their legendary predecessors, were shamefully reducing the image of the guide to worthlessness. Gerster was proud of the traditional guides who had lived through the golden years of the Adirondacks:

> Old Lon or Alonso, born about 65 years ago [1831] on Wood's point Raquette Lake, where his father had established the first farm, is a refreshing and typical Adirondack man of the old style. Cleancut features with shrewd brown eyes, a good hook of a nose, a white stubby chin beard, all this upon a tall wiry, now slightly bent frame, clean and sweet of raiment, cheery, helpful and civil as to manners, always industrious, he is a pleasing contrast to the modern, dirty, lazy, rapacious, drunken and ignorant Adirondack guide. (129)

Though celebrative of the old ways, Gerster and Byron-Curtiss did not romanticize the Adirondack guide in the same way that Emerson, Hoffman, Headley, or Cooper had. The sentimentalism and "great man" technique through which John Cheney had become a local hero is absent, as is the opulent language used to mystify him, and in their place is a realistic depiction of human traits. Notice for example Byron-Curtiss's description of "Uncle John," an old guide and woodsman who, because of a mistake made in the marking of the Adirondack League Club property, had to defend his camp from the club members. Uncle John threatened to shoot them if they came near his property, and the club members, anxious to remove him from what they considered to be their lands, decided it was best to come at another time:

> Uncle John Van Dyke, however, did not escape the inevitable reaction from such a nervous strain. It was violent and serious for a little while. He did not realize the strain he had been under and how close he had been to pulling the trigger and killing a man until he saw the men rowing away. Then he began to shake like an aspen leaf. His hands fluttered so that he could not let down the hammer of his rifle. He called to Watkins to come help him. Watkins, as he told me, had kept out of sight fearing a homicide and did not want to be a witness against his good friend. Once he assisted in lowering the hammer he took firearm from John's shaking hands and led him into the State House. (128-129)

Uncle John, a "skilled woodsman" (125), guide, and "solitary individual" (125) was well-known and very much respected by the natives. As much as Byron-Curtiss admired the old man for standing up for himself against the Adirondack League Club members, he writes the incident describing the vulnerability and fear Uncle John felt. This is no Natty Bumppo, but an ordinary man who, in spite of his expertise of woodsmanship and self-reliance in the wilderness, practically crumbles in the face of "a nervous strain."

Moreover, he relied on a lawyer and the State House to secure further safety of his property, and did not take matters into his own hands in the way that the archetypical frontiersman, impatient and skeptical of bureaucratic justice, would have done. Guides were prone to fault by their very human nature, and both writers sympathized deeply with them. Gerster, for example, had genuine respect for those who had well proven their abilities in the past, even if they were now only a shadow of their old selves. Such respect is evident in his attempt to help the guide Mike McGuire:

> Poor Mike was really on his last legs, and suffering dropsy due to alcohol hepatitis, chronic nephritis and cardiac trouble. The once indefatigable hunter, famous guide, fisherman, fearless river driver, cook, and generally accomplished woodsman, who earned and spent money "like water," who was famous for his wit and skill in difficult circumstances surprising the hunter or fisherman, has, in consequence of his addiction to alcohol, become a pauper, "living on the town" as the saying goes, had lost health & almost everything else . . . I tried to cheer him up by telling him our encounter with the bear, and this was the only time when his eye showed some animation. When I slipped a little gift into his fist, the old fellow broke down and cried . . . (85-86)

Gerster also alludes directly to the human qualities of his close friend, the legendary guide Alvah Dunning. Like many people in Raquette Lake, Dunning was turning against William West Durant at the time that he was losing his fortune (see item 3.3. of this section). During the time of the lawsuits Gerster still defended the magnate, in spite of the fact that, as Craig Gilborn indicates, the friendship between Gerster and Durant would "cool" (xix) in later years. Nevertheless, he refuses to condemn Dunning, who he considers to be the pawn of more "venomous" characters:

> The baseness of human nature shows itself now to a remarkable extent among the "uncorrupted denizens of the woods." Everybody, even old Alvah, is turning against W.W. Durant, because they know that he is in trouble, and those are the most venomous, who have received most kindness from him. We were grieved to hear Alvah talk against D., who had kept him in his sickness at Pine Knot for a whole winter, nursed & doctored him, and showed him much kindness, as can never be repaid in money or goods. But sad as it is to see the old man debase himself, this is to a great extent due to his increasing senility. However, from the fact that they have turned even Alvah against him, I conclude that D.'s enemies are straining every nerve to ruin him. Which I hope the fates may avert! (90)

Aside from the realistic, down-to-earth portraits of Adirondackers presented by both writers, Byron-Curtiss's writings also contributed to recording regional tall tales (see item 6 of Students' Discussion for more on Adirondack tall tales). By using meta-narration (stories within stories), Byron-Curtiss captured the traditional oral nature of Adirondack tales, propagated from mouth to mouth while exaggerating and distorting the facts along the way. In the end, neither Byron-Curtiss nor other storytellers minded the actual veracity of the story; clearly many of them were unbelievable, but what were of value were the humor and the ingenious creativity inherent in the plot and the characters. The realism with which he described Adirondack folk is left aside in these passages to entertain the hyperbolic schemes common to tall tales. Among the most colorful characters that Byron-Curtiss portrayed through the recording of tall tales, was Atwell Martin, the North Lake hermit and guide. Apparently, though not unskilful in the backwoods life, Atwell was especially famous for his stories and for the stories other Adirondackers made about him. His insatiable appetite resulted in comic tales of his overeating, and his shyness before the opposite sex was exemplified through the story of how he had once locked up two women in a cabin for the night so that neighbors

would not gossip about him being in the company of the ladies. But it was his own hunting stories which especially earned him a place in tall tale narratives. The writer makes it a point to ascertain how he came across these stories: "the Beach boys told me that Atwell told them about a hairy experience up on what we now call Wolf Mountain" (41), he begins one of the tales. In this particular story, Atwell is chased by a pack of wolves. Not knowing what to do, he climbs a tree. The wolves, persistent in their desire to eat Atwell, turned to a rather unusual solution:

> The wolves had enlisted the help of a beaver to cut down the tree. Perhaps it was the revenge for his trapping their clan members. When the tree came crashing down it caused so much confusion within the wolf pack that Atwell was able to take on the wolves choking them to death with his bare hands. Atwell said he got enough bounty out of their hides to pay for his trouble.
>
> This choking to death of wild animals who threatened him was a common thing with Atwell. Panther Bay on North Lake gets its name from the fact that he choked a panther to death there once. And it is said that one winter when he was short of provisions (having had no powder or bullets) he secured meat by the simple process of walking up to a deer that was floundering helplessly in deep snow and secured it by shutting off its wind with his strong hands. (42)

Marvellous things also happened to Atwell when he did have a rifle with him. He once killed a bear with the sweat of his forehead, literally. Having no more bullets, Atwell "clawed off a handful of frozen lumps on his face" (43) which melted in the barrel of the gun. When he fired, the water turned into an icicle as it touched the cold atmosphere. Byron-Curtiss celebrates the outcome of the affair: "this icicle took the bear between the eyes and the poor beast died of water on the brain!" (43). Another story tells of how Atwell was able to kill two foxes thanks to an ingenious idea:

> Atwell espied a fox curled up and asleep in one of the hollows. He pulled up his gun to shoot it, and as he aimed he noted another fox curled up, asleep in the other hollow. He shifted the muzzle of his gun slightly, so as to hit the sharp edge on the rock, and fired. The bullet was split into halves on the sharp edge and killed both foxes. (43)

As is the general result of oral storytelling, eventually the same theme with different variations leads to the emergence of a body of popular literature representative of a region. Often times, tall tales transcend their local boundaries to appeal to the entirety of the country's spirit. And other times, a region may adopt a certain tale and make it its own. As William Chapman White wrote, "the Adirondack country has many hunting and fishing stories, but too often they turn out to be only the hunting and fishing stories of all America, adapted to the Adirondacks" (38). Sometimes the name of the original source is lost, and just the story remains. One of the tales that Byron-Curtiss related is of how Atwell once killed a deer who was guiding a blind mate by letting him grab a hold of his tail with his teeth. The blind creature stood confused and "with the tail of his companion dangling from his mouth" (38). Atwell "took the end of the gory tail in his hand and led the deer to his cabin's clearing where he butchered it properly" (38). The same story appears in Helen Escha Tyler's collection, *Adirondack Tall Tales*, only Tyler claims that the man to whom it had happened was "a gentleman of cloth" (67) from Bloomingdale, in the Saranac Lake region. It is hard to say where in the Adirondacks the original version actually spawned, but in the end it mattered little to those who kept the stories alive through oral transmission.

Gerster's and Byron-Curtiss's writings also provide some first-hand insight into the transitional stage of the Adirondacks toward the conservation era. This was a phenomenon that was taking place over many wilderness areas of the country and which would be epitomized by the politics of Theodore Roosevelt and the philosophies of Gifford Pinchot and John Muir. The latter was more inclined towards preservation of the wilderness, but was nonetheless extremely influential in American conservationist mentality. (For more on Roosevelt's conservation ethics see item 6 of Scholars' Debate.) Now that the frontier had vanished, the conquered lands were to be managed and the forests and watersheds were to be protected through wise exploitation of resources. This required a federal control of the territories, and decisions as to how make use of the land were made by politicians, foresters, and upper-class sportsmen who were outsiders of the region at the expense of the customs and needs of natives and locals. For Indian tribes, the conservation era would alienate them from their native lands. For instance, the Havasupi were vanished from their grounds in the Grand Canyon and access to the traditional hunting grounds of the Blackfeet was prohibited with the creation of Glacier National Park. The consequences were devastating for all who had made the newly protected region their permanent settlement. Benjamin Johnson describes the conflict between wilderness advocates and locals as one where each party strove to maintain their interests. Conservationists had the law on their side, leaving locals to rely on their own wits:

> Because a wide range of rural Americans continued to hunt, fish, gather, log, and farm in the new parks and forests, these conservation measures often criminalized their ways of making a living. Local people generally sought to maintain their subsistence practices in the face of efforts by public lands bureaucracies (and other locals) to prevent them from doing so. (115)

By the time Gerster and Byron-Curtiss recorded their experiences, Verplanck Colvin had alarmed State officials with his topographical survey and had called for the protection of the Adirondack watersheds. In 1885 the Forest Preserve was created, and in 1892, the same year that Byron-Curtiss was commissioned as the leader of Christ Church in Forestport, the blue line marked the perimeter to the Adirondack Park. (See item 3.4. of this section and item 9 of Scholars' Debate for more on Colvin and the conservation movement in the Adirondacks.) The rigorous enforcement of game laws in the Forest Preserve had profound effects for locals. In the interest of maintaining and increasing tourism, open seasons for hunting were established in accordance with the incoming of outside sportsmen, disregarding the year-round needs of residents.

But, as Terrie points out, "locals could hunt and fish, at least in season, on the Forest Preserve," which "was definitely not the case on the posted private lands" (2008: 132). Indeed, in their effort to endorse conservation and to provide the private environment sought by the members, private preserves strained the possibilities of locals to hunt and fish. For Gerster, this was no problem. As Sidney Whelan points out in the book's notes, "without his friendship with William West Durant and a more or less standing invitation to fish and hunt on Durant's thousands of posted acres, Dr. Gerster's trips would have met with much less success" (10). In another note Whelan adds that "Dr. Gerster's entrée to the concentrations of deer at Lakes Shedd and Summer (now Sagamore and Kora) and Aluminum Pond . . . all owned by W.W. Durant, produced sport that he could have otherwise not enjoyed" (42). Gerster accepted his privileges, and to some extent believed that the conservation of resources was necessary, since

many species were near extinction, and trout was gone from many lakes and brooks due to overharvesting.

For Byron-Curtiss, the Adirondack League Club became his main target of criticism. Organized in 1890, the club was to become the largest private preserve of the region, controlling vast tracts in the Hamilton and Herkimer counties. In just three years, the Adirondack League Club went from owning 104,000 acres to 275 square miles (it was to be known as the "Adirondack Empire"). The club stipulated the following objectives:

> (1) The preservation and conservation of the Adirondack forest and the propagation and proper protection of fish and game in the Adirondack region. (2) The establishment and promotion of an improved system of scientific forestry. (3) The maintenance of an ample preserve for the benefit of its members for the purpose of hunting, fishing, rest, and recreation. (Donaldson, 159)

As in other private clubs, there was a sense of fraternity and camaraderie between the members. In these clubs, "one had to practice proper etiquette in the field, give game a sporting chance, and posses an aesthetic appreciation of the whole context of sport that included a commitment to its perpetuation" (Reiger, 54). In their attempt to ensure the viability of their policies and to secure the protection of the game within their boundaries, the Adirondack League Club endorsed very rigid methods, therefore acquiring an ill reputation among the locals, who had always found their own codes to be the most efficient for successful survival in the wilderness. Byron-Curtiss recalls numerous anecdotes surrounding the tensions between League Club members and locals, and he always defends the latter group's interests:

> North Country natives shared a code –a private law that did not look on hunting and fishing as a sport or pastime. Contrary to city sportsmen, Adirondack families relied on those activities to sustain life . . .
>
> Working and living among locals I saw graphic examples of their indifference to outside influence time and time again. Natives were staunch individualists. They distrusted a faceless system that made decisions that affected them. Their response was simple; they continued to follow *their* ways. However, the continuation of old customs did mean they could not leave any clues.
>
> If the land frowned upon any of their activities, they were forced to go underground. (190)

The backwoodsmen going "underground" protected each other, both from Forest Preserve state wardens and from Adirondack League Club policies. Byron-Curtiss was himself an occasional poacher, and he often aided others by relieving them of illegal fish or venison or offered his harvests to others. His anecdotes give a sense of the communal code and close-knit relationship maintained among the locals, who became united against game and seasonal laws. In one instance, Byron-Curtiss recalls fishing more than the legal limit:

> The fish were cleaned; I certainly didn't want them to go to waste, yet twelve trout legally did not belong to me. With my line reeled up, I unjoined my rod, packed the fish–twenty-two in one group and fifteen in another–and headed back to camp. Once there I placed the fish I did not own plus three I added to the mess on a plate, covered them with a dish towel and walked over to my friend and neighbor, a physician from Utica. He was sitting on his veranda relaxing with a corncob pipe in his mouth, his feet up on the railing, looking out at the lake. He greeted me cordially as his eyes started at the mound under the towel. I explained that I had had fair success fishing and thought

> he and his wife might enjoy the trout I caught. The dear old man let out a whoop and shouted to his wife, "Come out and see the trout the reverend has brought us."
>
> "Seriously, Doctor, I must tell you," I began to add as he reached out to take the plate, "all of the trout but three are illegal." He gave me a solemn, serious look such as he might use in announcing a diagnosis of a serious malady. Then he assured me that if I had any more of the same kind, he would gladly relieve me of them. (158-159)

In another occasion, Byron-Curtiss acted out the part of an Adirondack League Club member so as to avoid being reprimanded by an actual member who was suspicious of him. But sometimes state wardens were intimate with the locals and would overlook certain activities. Such was the case with Fred Bellinger, a warden who Byron-Curtiss praised for his manners in contrast to the hostility displayed by other wardens or League members:

> Otto Horner used to tell about the time he ran into Fred as he was hiking out of Sand Lake with a basket full of black bass. Fred pawed over the catch until he turned up a fourteen-inch trout –it was out of season. "Beauty ain't it?" he said looking Otto in the eye. Then he shook his head in mock sympathy, "Otto, you're getting color blind; you better go over to Boonville and see a doctor." (66)

Some of the locals of the Black Country region united against wardens and private club members in a group that called itself the "Dirty Dozen." Other than vandalism on posted signs, poaching, and scaring wardens, the Dirty Dozen, for the most part, did not pose a serious threat. They were a constant nuisance for the law enforcement, however, who often found it difficult to carry out regulations. O'Hern claims that the reverend did participate in some of the Dirty Dozen activities. Byron-Curtiss commemorates the group's initiation rite as follows:

> The Dirty Dozen started as a gang in 1897 when the Adirondack League Club put its first game protector, George Davis of Boonville, at the head of North Lake. Some of the locals got together to find some ways to keep him from getting "lonesome" on his job. The men viewed their wild pranks as basically harmless so long as no victim was physically hurt. In their eyes their actions did not make them wrongdoers.
>
> Byron [Cool] tipped off Davis that some poachers were at work out on the Horn Lake trail. He started up the trail with his coattails flying to keep up with him. A mile or two up he found a fresh deer hide stretched across the trail with this sign on it, "This is from the Dirty Dozen; you will be next."
>
> Davis sat down to consider the matter.
>
> A rifle bullet clipped the bark from a tree near his head. Davis jumped up and another bullet kicked up the dirt at his feet. Davis decided not to wait any longer. He started off full tilt for the foot of the lake, talking to himself. There he telephoned John Commerford, the manager of the club at Bisby Lake. Commerford came over with him the next day wearing a bowler hat and he and Davis went up the Horn Lake trail to look over the situation, They got back a little before dark and Commerford's stiff bowler hat had a hole right through the top. One of the women asked him, "Why Mr. Commerford, what happened to your nice new hat?" Commerford shrugged her off with the remark, "Oh, that's nothing. I tripped and ran a stub through it. I should have known better than wear a derby hat on the trail." The little lady slipped him a sly wink just to let him know the she knew he wasn't telling nothing but the truth.
>
> Davis quit that night. (91-92)

As "harmless" and picaresque as these assaults were, the Adirondacks are not without their violent episodes resulting from the tension. The most publicized case was the murder of Orrando P. Dexter in 1903. Dexter, one of the magnates with a property of

seven thousand acres in Franklin County, was shot in the back as he was driving his buggy down his driveway. According to Neal Burdick in his essay "Who Killed Orrando P. Dexter?" the identity of the murderer was common knowledge among the locals, but nobody pressed charges, and the case still remains today an unsolved mystery. While the harassment and abuse of his neighbors had cost Dexter his life, another millionaire, Rockefeller, successfully managed to intimidate his own neighbors with the purpose of adding their lands to his property. In spite of individual and collective rebelliousness against land management in the early conservation era, however, many locals also obeyed new regulations, even if they did not agree with them. As obstinate as Byron-Curtiss and the locals he portrayed were in their convictions, compliance to new legislations would eventually overpower most of the natives.

The recent publication of the anecdotes recorded by Gerster and Byron-Curtiss replenish the rich body of literature referring to Adirondack folks. Through their reflections on taste, their realistic depictions of the peoples, meta-narrative constructions, and references to contemporary changes towards progress, they contribute to the characterization of the Adirondacker in a new archetypical stage away from the furnishings of Romanticism. Today, portraits of inhabitants of wilderness regions are cherished literary works reflecting a characteristic, unifying identity that stays true to this realism as opposed to mystified images which often continue to adhere to the local tourist industry and businesses. In 1991 the Adirondack Museum published *Adirondack Faces,* a book collecting the photographs by Mathias Oppersdorff (text by Alice Wolf Gilborn). *Adirondack Faces* consists of a series of photographic (and textual) portraits of year-round residents in the Adirondacks –from a logger, a guide, a ranger, a knitter and a guide-boat maker to a teacher, a lawyer, and a grocery store owner. More than fifty locals making a living in the Adirondacks illustrate the mosaic-like identity of the inhabitants of the region. The uniting, cohesive factor is still the same that it was considered to be forty years earlier. In 1954 William Chapman White wrote that the one common thing all Adirondackers had was their knowledge and love for the woods. In *Adirondack Faces*, nature remains the essential nexus. In Alice Wolf Gilborn's words, "Oppersdorff's subjects are from every part of the Adirondacks. Some are wealthy, but most work at service or blue-collar jobs. Yet for all Adirondackers alike, the single dominant, democratizing fact is nature itself" (xvi).

### 4.7.- The "Price" of Modernity: Tuberculosis and the Adirondack Sanctuary. From Trudeau to Martha Reben

The end of the nineteenth century also marked the beginning of another side to the Adirondack story voiced through the many tuberculosis patients that sought the Northern Country for the improvement of their health. Often these journeys were ultimate desperate attempts; a final strife for the chance of life. For others, they were routine visits in order to restore their ailing lungs enough to return to their lives in the city. What personal accounts of treating consumption in the Adirondacks remain attest to the different ways that the concept of wilderness can be conditioned through the lens of sickness. Further research on the deterministic influence of disease over individual and collective perspectives on nature is still to be accomplished in the fields of environmental history and ecocriticism. (Only in 2007, Gregg Mitman published *Breathing Space: How Allergies Shape Our Lives and Landscapes*, one of the

pioneering studies reflecting on the relationship between landscapes, geographies, and ailments.) Indeed, health conditions have more than once proved to be the incentive, the constant or the variable when considering not only intellectual and aesthetic approaches to the idea of wilderness, but also in regards to how certain landscapes have been physically modified with the purpose of "improving" the environmental conditions under which patients must live. This item is intended to provide an overview of how tuberculosis affected the way in which the Adirondacks were perceived. Through the recollections of Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau (1848-1915), the founder of the Cottage Sanatorium at Saranac Lake, the letters of Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), the poetry of Adelaide Crapsey (1878-1914), and the autobiographical accounts of Martha Reben (1911-1964), the reader will observe that each writer/patient adopts a different attitude towards nature. These opposite positions are of course determined by the subject's personal character; but the powerful influence of their condition over their depiction of the environment should not be undermined, not only because it is the reason for which they travelled to the Adirondacks in the first place, but because the fragility of their bodies and the constant shadow of death made them reconsider the meaning of the physical world, forever tending toward cyclical renewal, yet ephemeral for them. Before considering the texts, let us first briefly examine the state of affairs regarding tuberculosis toward the end of the nineteenth century.

In item 4.5. I explained how W.H.H. Murray's book had popularized the image of the Adirondacks as the magic mountain that would cure even the most weakened victims of consumption. I also commented on how such an image backfired on the writer when tourists realized that such a magical recovery was not happening for them. The philosophy behind Murray, muscular Christianity, was an ideological phenomenon that responded to the growing industrialization in cities and to modern scientific thought. For decades before "Murray's Rush," many physicians had suggested that a natural environment and outdoor life could restore–or at least improve–the health of tuberculosis patients, but it was toward the end of the nineteenth century when the argument really had a social impact. The widespread popularization of the Adirondacks as a destination for tuberculosis patients was partly due to Murray's *Adventures in the Wilderness*, but it was Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau, through the foundation of the Adirondack Cottage Sanatorium in the 1880s, that reinforced the image of the Adirondacks as a health resort to an official level.

Trudeau's approach to the treatment of tuberculosis and his research as to the causes happened after the German bacteriologist Robert Koch had discovered the tubercle bacillus. Before Koch, only hypotheses and speculations surrounded physicians' knowledge about consumption (also called phthisis, tuberculosis, or TB). In the first half of the nineteenth century statistics had established consumption as the first cause of death of civilians in the United States and in Europe. At the time it was not believed to be contagious, and what intrigued doctors the most was why certain populations seemed more susceptible to contracting the illness than others. Statistics and inventories concluded that tuberculosis was more common in women than in men, and that people living in rural communities were less prone to sicken than city dwellers. These results led to the reconsideration of the new social conditions that scientific and industrial advancements were providing. In Georgina Feldberg's words,

> TB was unlike other infections in that it affected some populations and individuals preferentially. Concern about differential susceptibility dominated American discussions of tuberculosis from mid-nineteenth century onward, and as each

> generation attempted to make sense of this preferential, or differential, susceptibility, the explanations they offered reflected and reinforced their uncertainties about a changing scientific and social order. In the decades that bounded the Civil War, medical writings exposed apprehensions about professional status, regional rivalries, and the growth of industrial cities, and they foreshadowed persistent American concerns with the social dimensions of disease. (11-12)

Evidence seemed to point out that the differential causes were not only environmental, but social as well. It was most visibly in cities where the profound effects of modern civilization were noted. A hectic urban lifestyle caused nervousness, distress and depression; such ailments were sharpened by damp, marshy areas, poor ventilation, and other climatic features that were present in many urban environments. Parallel to these medical claims made by George Beard in *American Nervousness* (1881), in which he hypothesized about the risk factors for the contraction of hay fever and neurasthenia, was, as we have seen, the notion that urban environments, with their delicate, formal ways, threatened men's virility. The solution to both problems was in nature: by consuming nature, patients could restore their health, and in the meantime men could remove themselves from the menace of becoming effeminate. Tuberculosis appeared as the curse of the modern world; the price of the progress which had taken Americans away from the Jeffersonian ideal of the agrarian republic and into the nucleus of environments prone to diseases. Campaigning for the Adirondacks as an ideal retreat for the sake of health continued throughout the 1870s and 1880s.

A year after the publication of *American Nervousness*, Koch presented his discovery of the tubercle bacillus before medical circles. His conclusions revolutionized physicians' approach to the disease:

> One has been accustomed until now to regard tuberculosis as the outcome of social misery and to hope by relief of distress to diminish the disease. But in the final struggle against this dreadful plague of the human race one will no longer have to contend with an indefinite something but with an actual parasite. (Quoted in Marmot, 297)

Koch's identification of an actual bacillus against which to treat did not of course mean that environmental factors were now deemed as irrelevant. Many physicians argued that individual reactions to the bacillus depended on the conditions of the host: matters such as whether the bacillus could be inherited (diathetic explanation) or transmitted, and how environmental factors could induce risk were debated for years to come. Trudeau, for example, who was motivated by Koch's discovery to study bacteriology in New York and to found the first tuberculosis laboratory in America in Saranac Lake, still followed the claims made by Hermann Brehmer more than twenty years earlier. According to Brehmer, who in 1863 had founded the first open-air sanatorium for TB patients in Germany, the environmental factors inherent to the wilderness and to life outdoors were to be used in a certain way so as to direct the patient towards improvement. William Chapman White states that Brehmer's work was essentially followed by Trudeau in the Adirondacks:

> [Trudeau] believed, as he wrote, that the Adirondack country had some special virtue for the sick; this he felt was due to large amounts of ozone in the air, produced by the woods, and to the resinous odors from the evergreens. He also knew that sick men went elsewhere and recovered. It was clear that it was not so much the climate or geography as how those factors were used. (170)

In 1886 J.W. Stickler published *The Adirondacks as a Health Resort*, in which he continued to insist on the hazards brought on by urban environments, which created an atmospheric risk to contract not only consumption, but diseases of the nerves and the throat as well:

> If the air be vitiated by repeated breathing as a result of crowding in large towns or cities, or because of confinement in poorly ventilated apartments; by the impurities from factories, poisonous exhalations from low and poorly drained land, defective sewerage, etc., etc., an unhealthy state of the system will soon be established, as shown by languor, headache, impairment of appetite, mental depression,–and and if the person be a sufferer from bronchitis, asthma, or pulmonary consumption–a sense of compression of the chest will be complained of, and a desire expressed for air that will satisfy when breathed into the lungs. (8)

Stickler goes on to endorse the Adirondacks as an excellent environment for physical recuperation because of "the purity of the air," "the purity of the water," and "the temperature of the air" (46). Moreover, in the Adirondacks one could find silence, as opposed to "the rumbling wains, screeching whistles, roaring locomotives [and] tramp of feet" (51) that caused nervous breakdowns on city people. Like Brehmer and Trudeau, Stickler also celebrated how these environmental factors could be used: "there is something to interest and divert the mind, and change the tension, and so induce rest and give conditions for recuperation" (51-52). In addition to this, in the Adirondacks patients could find "seclusion from temptation to harmful indulgence" (52). In the list of "harmful indulgences," Stickler included the luxuries that signified upon modern upper and middle-class life, such as "soda fountains, ice-cream saloons, restaurants" and "dinner parties" (52). The luxuries and vanities characteristic of Gilded Age America and the middle class were of course, as we have seen, present in the Adirondacks; but Stickler regarded this materialism as unnecessary and easily avoidable by patients: "Silly people can find fashionable hotels on the lakes here and there, if they will," he wrote, "but they do not come for health, having no estimate of its worth" (52).

It is in this context of scientific knowledge of the disease and of critical outlooks on urban environments and industrial progress that the Adirondacks emerged as a sanctuary for consumptives. In 1884 Alice and Mary Hunt, two factory girls, became the first patients of Trudeau's Adirondack Cottage Sanatorium. They stayed in a small, red cottage which was to be known as "Little Red," and which today is part of the Trudeau Institute compound along with the statue that Gutzom Borglum made of Trudeau. (In 1964, both the cabin and the statue were moved from their original location to a hill in the shores of Lower Saranac Lake.) From then on the Sanatorium grew, and so did Saranac Lake as a town. Numerous boarding houses sprouting along the streets were a sign of the generous income that TB patients were bringing into the village. By 1890, many of these boarding cottages were exclusively built with the purpose of attracting consumptives, yet Trudeau's discovery of the infectiousness of TB alarmed many hotel owners, who started carrying a "no invalids" policy. Despite these measures, Saranac Lake continued to grow, and "by 1920 more than one hundred and fifty [boarding cottages], with room for four to thirty patients, cared for the two thousand patients who were in the village" (White, 173).

But before Trudeau became the leading researcher of tuberculosis in America, he had been well acquainted with the illness at a personal level. He had nursed his elder brother in his death bed at a time when no TB sanatoriums existed in the country, and he had

experienced the disease in his own body. In 1873, at the height of his weakened state, he headed to Paul Smith's hotel in the Adirondacks as an attempt to restore his health. After an arduous journey through Saratoga, Whitehall, Lake Champlain and Plattsburgh, a feverish Trudeau reached the hotel, where he was carried in the arms of Paul Smith's brother-in-law, Fred Martin, up the stairs. "Why, Doctor, you don't weigh more than a dried lambskin!" remarked the sympathetic man. In his autobiography (first published in 1916), Trudeau recalls this episode very vividly. All throughout the journey, which he made in the company of his friend, Lou Livingston, he had felt the constant "fever and the fatigue" (84) typical of his condition. Trudeau recounts how Fred Martin "was about to give my hand a squeeze that would, no doubt, have finished me when I whispered to him I was sick and wanted to be carried to my room" (84). But as soon as he was settled at Paul Smith's he felt that the restorative powers of nature and the wilderness would improve–if not cure–his condition:

> During the entire journey I had felt gloomy forebodings as to the hopelessness of my case, but under the magic influence of the surroundings I had longed for, these all disappeared and I felt convinced I was going to recover. How little I knew, as I shook hands with the great, strong men who came up to my room that evening to say a word of cheer to me, that forty-two years later most of them would be dead and that I should still be in the Adirondacks trying to describe my first arrival at Paul Smith's as an invalid! (85)


*The Trudeau Institute at Saranac Lake, founded by the Trudeau Foundation. The research center stands as a legacy of the Saranac Laboratory for the Study of Tuberculosis, founded by Trudeau in 1884.*

*Above: Gutzom Borglum's statue of Trudeau (1918), located in the compounds of the Trudeau Institute. The statue was a gift from 1200 former TB patients who were treated by the philanthropist doctor. The plate of the statue reads: "Today it reflects in its sensitive rendering the humanity and suffering that Trudeau experienced while bringing hope and comfort to so many others."*

*Below: "Little Red," also located in the compounds of the Trudeau Institute.*

Whether Trudeau actually felt as optimistic as he claims we will never know; but no matter the truth of his state of mind in the hotel room that evening in 1873, what is of interest is the image of the wilderness he seeks to convey. That same night he "ate heartily" and then "slept well and woke full of hope and anticipation and interest in [his] new surroundings" (85). The very next morning he felt how his "hunting blood responded at once" and soon enough he was lying on a boat with "balsam firs and blankets" (85) in the company of a guide. "My spirits were high and I forgot all the misery and sickness I had gone through in the past two months" (85), he wrote. Trudeau's words in a way echo Murray's story about the invalid young man who practically magically recovered in the wilderness. But unlike Murray, Trudeau had his medical credibility to back him up and the success of his research at the Sanatorium to serve as empiric proof to the validity of his statement. When he published his autobiography, he had already shown to the world that the Adirondack climate and wilderness did indeed aid in improving the patient's condition, though of course it was not a guarantee for everybody. Many of the consumptives arriving to the Sanatorium (some of which were in a better condition than Trudeau was back in 1873) succumbed to the disease in spite of the healing powers of the environment. In any case, what I would like to point out is that Trudeau projects an image of the Adirondacks in which, although he does not resort to scientific terminology and discourse, he appeals to the same curative motives that Stickler did in his book. The air certainly made Trudeau feel better, but it was also the psychological effects of being in the wilderness which were crucial for his improvement. The Adirondacks provided the silence and the seclusion necessary not only for rest, but for motivating the patient to make an adequate use of the environmental factors and sporting activities that were now available to him.

Contrary to Trudeau's impressions, Robert Louis Stevenson did not find the Adirondacks pleasurable. Afflicted with consumption, Stevenson stayed at the Baker Cottage in Saranac Lake from October 1887 to April 1888. Initially, the Stevenson party (which included the writer's wife, Fanny Osbourne, his mother, Margaret Balfour Stevenson, and his stepson, Lloyd Osbourne) had planned on accompanying him to Colorado Springs, but the promising research and treatment that Trudeau was carrying out in the Adirondacks persuaded the family to head to the Northern Country instead. Stevenson went through a prolific phase of writing during that winter: he wrote more than ten pieces for *Scribner's* and part of *The Master of Ballantrae.* His writings on the Adirondacks also include the ballad "Ticonderoga, A Legend of the Western Highlands," which collects the ghost story surrounding the death of Major Duncan Campbell of Inverawe in 1758.

Stevenson became close with Trudeau, and their friendship–as well as their arguments–were commemorated by Stephen Chalmers in *The Penny Piper of Saranac* (1912), a homage to the Stevenson that lived in Saranac. But Stevenson was never fascinated neither by the beauty of the Adirondacks nor by the sporting possibilities available to him. As Chalmers recalled, the Penny Piper (Stevenson) said that "the only redeeming feature of the place was that it reminded him of someplace else" (6). Chalmers also ascertained that "he did not fish or hunt, because he could not bear the sight of suffering and death, even in animals that are regarded as fair game" (25). Thus, the sporting life that Trudeau and other male patients and tourists enjoyed in the wilderness repelled Stevenson, who made occasional ice-skating in Moody Pond his exercise of choice. His letters are testimony to the veracity of Chalmer's descriptions, for although Stevenson did acknowledge the fact that the climate was responsible for his improvement, he was

never charmed by Saranac Lake's scenery or immediate wilderness. Comparisons to other places he had visited often appeared, but unlike the earlier analogies that romantics had made with the European landscape so as to celebrate the grandeur of the American wilderness, Stevenson's descriptions reveal an apathetic stance toward the environment. In a letter to John Addington Symonds, he writes with the languor characteristic of an unimpressed beholder:

> Here we are in a kind of wilderness of hills and fir-woods and boulders and snow and wooden houses. So far as we have gone the climate is grey and harsh, but hungry and somnolent; and although not charming like that of Davos, essentially bracing and briskening. The country is a kind of insane mixture of Scotland and a touch of Switzerland and a dash of America and a thought of the British Channel in the skies. (174)


*Robert Louis Stevenson Memorial Cottage and Museum at Saranac Lake.*

A month later, in a letter to Sidney Colvin, the reader can appreciate that the lethargic responses to Saranac Lake continued, although the writer did start to note his progress toward physical recovery:

> I walk in my verandy in the snaw, sir, looking over one of those dabbled wintry landscapes that are (to be frank) so chilly to the human bosom, and up at a grey, English–nay, *mehercle*, Scottish–heaven; and I think it pretty bleak; and the wind swoops at me round the corner, like a lion, and fluffs the snow in my face; and I could aspire to be elsewhere; but yet I do not catch a cold, and yet, when I come in, I eat. (174)

In another letter addressed to Colvin three months later, Stevenson becomes bitter about the hostile climate, even if it is the adequate cure for him: "I am . . . wonderfully better: this harsh, grey, glum, doleful climate has done me good," he stated, "you cannot fancy how sad a climate it is" (175). By the month of his departure, his dislike seemed to have turned from apathy to vehemence. In a letter to a Miss Ferrier, one of the final ones he wrote from Saranac, he expressed the following:

> A bleak, blackguard, beggarly climate, of which I can say no good except that it suits me and some others of the same or similar persuasions whom (by all rights) it ought to kill. It is a form of Arctic St. Andrews, I should image; and the miseries of forty degrees below zero, with a high wind, have to be felt to be appreciated. The greyness of the heavens here is a circumstance eminently revolting to the soul; I have near forgot the aspect of the sun –I doubt if this be news; it is certainly no news to us. (176)

Contrasting Stevenson's shift from apathy to frustration, we find the example of Adelaide Crapsey's verses written during the last months of her life at the Sanatorium. Crapsey, born in New York in 1878 and the daughter of an Episcopalian clergyman, was around twenty-five when she first started showing symptoms of TB. Crapsey was a fervent scholar at the time, and would remain so for the rest of her life. In spite of the fatigue she suffered due to consumption, she travelled to Europe where she occasionally worked as a lecturer and guide. She eventually returned to America to work as a teacher, but soon enough her ailing condition forced her to abandon her job and travel back to Europe in 1908. Here she dedicated herself to the intense study of the poetic metric system, but while her devouring interest in literature nurtured her already cultivated intellect, her health continued to deteriorate. In 1911 she accepted a position as a poetics instructor in Smith College and headed for Massachusetts. Her work ethics and endeavor clearly impressed her colleagues, for when she was not teaching, she spent "many hours in . . . an airless room in the Smith College Library" (Smith, S., 11) working on her own verses and the cinquain metric. By 1913 the gravity of her condition was confirmed: she collapsed during her summer vacation and resolved to head for Saranac Lake for treatment. Here she would spend the last year of her life, and during that time she was not to be relieved of her suffering. She underwent pneumothorax procedures, a painful treatment in which "a hollow needle was inserted between two of the patient's ribs so gas could be injected into the body cavity to collapse a diseased lung so that it could rest" (Winter, 61). In letters to her friends (collected by Susan Sutton Smith), there is evidence to support the idea that practically throughout the year at Saranac, Crapsey was at a state of denial of the seriousness of her condition; but the gravity of some of her verses seem to indicate that the introspection achieved through the process of creation made her painfully aware of the pending shadow of death. In the summer of 1914 she left for Rochester to visit her family and with the resolution to find another sanatorium for treatment, but the trip and the hot climate proved fatal and after several weeks of confinement she died at home.

The cinquain poems and other verse forms she wrote at Saranac were published a year after her death in the collection *Verse.* Although in this case study we will only focus only on a few of the verses, it must be said that the perfected cinquain form presented in *Verse* as well as the rigorous order of the poems (Crapsey left a "Presentation Copy") are evidence of the admirable metric control that has earned the poet an esteemed position in the history of American poetry. As Kate Winter claims, "it would be reductive to classify Adelaide Crapsey as an Adirondack writer" (57), but nonetheless, her verses serve as an interesting contrast to the reflections made by other TB patients at

Saranac. Remarkable approaches to the poetry of Crapsey have been attempted by several scholars. In her essay "Death, Order, and Poetry: 'The Presentation Copy' of Adelaide Crapsey," Karen Alkalay-Gut traces, for example, the hidden truth behind the order that Crapsey had selected for her pieces. "The poems, like dots on a chart, illustrate the progress of a comprehension about death and poetry –one that did not occur chronologically but retrospectively" (Alkalay-Gut, 264). Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, in the letters that Crapsey addressed to her friend, Esther Lowenthal, during her stay at Saranac, the good-natured humor with which she speaks of the treatment is discursively antithetical to the severe asperity with which she expresses herself in the poems. There is "a growing awareness that may have helped the dying poet to cope with and accept her fate" (Alkalay-Gut, 264), an awareness that sometimes lingers in the resignation of acceptance and other times defies her destiny, refusing to succumb to the frailty of her ephemeral body. Her masterful use of metric form contains and condenses the anger and the rage as much as the pain and her contemplations of the eternal cycles of nature appeal to the beauty of the physical world and sometimes evoke pseudo-gothic images. These cryptic thoughts are most clearly illuminated in "To the Dead in the Grave-Yard Under My Window: –Written in a Moment of Exasperation," in which Crapsey projects her bitterness against the bodies buried at the cemetery:

> How can you lie so still? All day I watch
> And never a blade of all the green sod moves
> To show where restlessly you toss and turn . . .
> The text so weary in my ears: "Lie still
> And rest; be patient and lie still and rest."
> I will not be patient! I will not lie still! . . . (*Verse,* 81)

Crapsey's anguish must undoubtedly have been more acute because of her resentment towards the physical lassitude she was made to live by. Despite her symptoms, the poet had travelled extensively and she had played basketball in college. "How much more painful," writes Winter, "it must have been for a young woman used to activity, even half of her time, to contemplate a life confined to bed and hours of complete physical passivity" (60). The weary rest that was to be her treatment only pushed her poetic aptitudes, and the movement and dynamism from which she was deprived presented themselves in her verses through her contemplations on the changes of nature and the cycles of time. Where Stevenson detached and alienated himself from the hostile climate, Crapsey turns to personifications of the weather. In contrast to her physical passivity, seasons are not mere stages submissive to change, but rather, they are the agents of transformation; they are live entities expressing their movement through the shapes of time, embracing or destroying with their limbs what earthly beings they may encounter. In "Winter," Crapsey alludes to the inevitability of her destiny through the winter, which like the grim reaper, comes forth to claim souls:

> The cold
> With steely touch
> Grips all the land. . alack,
> The little people in the hills
> Will die! (*Verse,* 41)

In "Autumn" the agent, characterized as a "maiden," is an artist with less deadly purposes. Mortality, however, is inherent to the short period of time the season has to itself within the cycle:

Autumn, the maiden, turns,
Leans to the earth with ineffable
Gesture . . .
Ah, lovelier
Is her refusal than
Yielding who pauses with grave
Backward smiling, with light
Unforgettable touch of
Fingers withdrawn. . . Pauses, lo
Vanishes . . . fugitive, wistful. . . . (*Verse*, 101)

Crapsey in body and in soul becomes a part of that language through which nature speaks. Insignificant as her life may be inside the vast spectrum of creatures to perish, it is not an "object" which nature treats with indifference. In "Night Winds" the poet depicts her awareness of the message brought by natural elements:

The old
Old winds that blew
When chaos was, what do
They tell the clattered trees that I
Should weep? (*Verse*, 42)

Other elements appear as signs of a destiny yet–and surely–to be fulfilled. The following poem is titled "The Warning":

Just now,
Out of the strange
Still dusk. . as strange, as still. .
A white moth flew. Why am I grown
So cold? (*Verse*, 49)

And sometimes, the intended message of the natural element has no meaning beyond the silence of an object or situation. Death is void of meaning just as much as it is empty of justice; ontologically speaking, it is only a paradox: death is the lasting state of being which Crapsey had wanted her life to be. Like the snow and the dawn in the disquieting poem "The Triad," she accepts the fact that she will inevitably reach the eternity of quietness:

These be
Three silent things:
The falling snow. . . the hour
Before the dawn . . . the mouth of one
Just dead. (*Verse*, 33)

Crapsey's poetry reveals a stance toward the natural environment that emerges as a counterpoint to the optimistic vitality expressed by Trudeau and the discontent and disillusionment professed by Stevenson. Perhaps it was the nearness of death–or perhaps it was just a matter of character–which led Crapsey to her often disturbing representations of nature, a nature which she respects and sometimes seems to envy, but to which she refuses to hand absolute control of her life.

The final writer which we will consider for this item is Martha Rebentisch (Martha Reben), and how in her case, contracting tuberculosis opened for her a lifestyle based on

the communion with the wilderness of the Adirondacks. Reben was only sixteen when she was diagnosed with consumption; her mother had died of TB when she was six. Reben, a Manhattan native, struggled for the next few years until she was finally taken to the Saranac Lake Sanatorium in 1927. After three years of unsuccessful surgical procedures, Reben decided against her doctors' and friends' advice to spend a summer camping in the woods. She replied to an ad in the local paper which read: "Wanted: To get in touch with some invalid who is not improving, and who would like to go to the woods for the summer." That ad changed Reben's life forever: she contacted the advertiser, Fred Rice, a woodsman, guide-boat builder, and occasional carpenter with whom in the years to follow she would develop a father-daughter relationship. In *The Healing Woods* she writes that "three years of bed rest and as many operations had done nothing for my lungs, and I chose, now, rather than undergo the still more serious operation which the doctors were labeling my 'last chance,' to risk a summer in the open" (5-6). Fred Rice also had his reasons for undertaking the responsibility of an invalid. Winter notes that

> Rice had for years been interested in the sorts of cures and regimen used at the sanatorium and how far they deviated from the treatment that Dr. Edward Trudeau himself had devised. The fifty-five year old mountaineer was an advocate of the outdoors as a cure. (105)

Thus, in the summer of 1931, Rice paddled the physically frail Reben through Lower and Middle Saranac Lakes and up the Saranac River and took her to camp in the shores of Weller Pond. Little did Reben, a city girl, then know that she would grow so accustomed to the self-reliant way of life in the woods that she would spend the next six summers in the same spot. She learned to live in harmony with nature, and soon enough several sorts of small mammals and birds were confident enough to linger around the camp. From raccoons, chipmunks, porcupines, and flying squirrels to a duck she called Mr. Dooley, Reben nursed several animals and took pleasure in bonding with them. It was a side to living in nature that Rice was not used to practicing, but who just as well enjoyed it. Rice made sure to also teach Reben the basics of camp life: from making a fire, tracking, and using a compass to fishing. Despite his attempts to make a hunter out of her, Reben could not find it in herself to shoot game. Reben spent the harsh winters in Saranac, always near Rice and his wife. During those months she enrolled in English and journalism courses, and she kept a notebook which would, years later, be edited and published as *The Healing Woods* (1952). The book was followed by *The Way of the Wilderness* (1955) and *A Sharing of Joy* (1963), all of which enjoyed considerable success. Already during that first summer in 1931, Reben's health had improved noticeably. She was able to walk in the whereabouts of camp and perform chores which did not require excessive physical effort. The following summer, unable to afford Rice's services, she camped on her own. Once a week, Rice would come by to make sure that she was alright and would bring whatever supplies were necessary. In 1937, Reben assisted Rice in writing and publishing a pamphlet called "Fifty Years at a Health Resort," in which the woodsman echoed some of the thoughts that Trudeau had picked up from Brehmer: "Many an invalid whose condition was considered hopeless has been cured by living an outdoor life," Rice declared (see Links to Online Sources). Reben was one of those invalids who he believed had been cured by leading an outdoor life. In spite of what appeared to be an improving condition of her lungs, Reben's heart had been severely damaged due to previous treatments, and in 1941 she started camping on Hungry Bay at Middle Saranac and Pope Bay at Lower Saranac instead. A few years

later, Reben believed that she had completely recovered; in the closing pages to *The Healing Woods* she wrote:

> I wish I could say that I was cured of tuberculosis during my second summer in the woods, but the truth is that I never knew when this came about. It was more than ten years after I went into the woods before I had an X-ray taken or had a medical examination of any kind. These tests confirmed what I had already guessed –that I no longer had tuberculosis. (220)

Whether Reben died of congestive heart failure due to the treatment or to uncured TB is not known. She died in 1964, in her early fifties, leaving her estate to Fred Rice.

The excerpts that we will now consider are all extracted from *The Healing Woods*, which narrates her experiences from the summer of 1931 to the winter of 1932. References to tuberculosis are infrequent and short; but the occasional commentaries that Reben does make are significant. They are not only intended to advocate in favor of the healing qualities of nature, but also to evidence the absurdities of some measures of treatment, and the hypochondriac tendencies of many an invalid. For example, Reben contrasts Rice's pragmatism and common sense to her habits as a sick person:

> I sat up and reached for my fever thermometer and stuck it between my lips. It was the first thing I did every morning.
>
> "Want me to toss that thing out on the lake for you?" He crammed another stick of wood into the stove and slammed the griddle into place, then grinned at me.
>
> "What do you mean?"
>
> "Well, what good does it do? Except remind you twice a day that you're sick?"
>
> "But I have to keep a record of my temperature!" I said.
>
> "What for?"
>
> "Why, to fill in my chart."
>
> He hooted derisively. "Never knew a sick person yet who couldn't work up a symptom or imagine one to fill a blank space in a chart."
>
> It was true. I wondered why the absurdity of it had never occurred to me before. I bent over and put my thermometer in my suitcase where, along with most of my other phobias about illness, it remained for the rest of the summer. (30-31)

Not long after this episode, and within the first days of camping, Reben's characteristic naturalness to keeping an open mind led her to the reconsideration of rules she had always lived by as a consumptive: "Not more than a week ago," she writes, "I myself would have been shocked had any one suggested that I sit outdoors in a pouring rain. But here I was with water under me, above me, and all around me, and I not only felt as good as I usually did, but better" (33). She continues noting small steps towards recovery: she recalls the pride she felt when she became able to "step out of a canoe," instead of having "to crawl out on hands and knees" (40), and she indulges in wandering in the camp whereabouts "to test [her] growing strength" (53). She does not become anxious for medical proof of this strength, but rather, providentially believes that the woods are healing her:

> I had no way of knowing what effect my new life was having on my lungs, but I knew that I was daily growing stronger and that my cheeks had lost their abnormal flush. I found enough to entertain me so that I seldom thought about my health. If I did become concerned about myself, Mr. Rice began telling me about persons he had known, during his long life in a health resort, who had been so much worse off than I was, yet

> who had lived to die of old age, that I promptly began to feel I had nothing really to worry about. (54)

Reben learns to not look at herself as an invalid. The metamorphosis toward the conversion into a new self involves extricating her fears of TB as much as assimilating the wilderness environment in which independence and self-reliance strengthen her body and character. The first time she returns to town she already feels suffocated by the atmosphere: the noise, the business and the lack of beauty serve as a confirmation that she now belongs to the natural world:

> As I rode through the heart of the village in a taxi, the streets looked narrow and crowded, the fronts of the houses and stores indescribably dingy and ugly. I had forgotten how unlovely civilization really was . . . My greatest shock came when I went to bed that night in a delightful little room . . . Surrounded by four walls, I found myself unable to draw a satisfactory breath. In camp I had become accustomed to the constant motion of cool, fresh, outdoor air! (111)

When Reben's father, sister, and brother visit the camp, the writer suggests that this detachment from society has transgressed to a familial level. Reben notes that they all felt "disconcerted at the crudeness of [her] surroundings" (90) which were "too alien for their city-bred natures" (91). The intimate relationship that develops between Reben and the wilderness is not unidirectional, but symbiotic: as Reben heals and fosters a sense of belonging to nature, she shifts from affectionate appreciations to a more mature preservationist perspective (see item 8 of Scholars' Debate for an analysis on Reben and the pathetic fallacy). Winter notes that "she quickly came to recognize the need for humans to stand out of the way and simply protect the environment which enhanced these [natural] processes" (110). Reben learned to respect nature's creatures and to appreciate the need of an intact wilderness (she eventually bought a tract of wetlands for a waterfowl sanctuary) through her many years at Weller Pond and through her friend and mentor, Rice. The woodsman often conversed with her about conservation and modifications of game laws, and it appears that in time Reben lured him toward a more preservationist position and he gave up hunting. In the final chapter of *The Healing Woods*, Reben becomes an advocate of the wilderness as the channel through which to cure TB as much to free oneself from the sense of alienation produced by progress and modern civilization. Wilderness has its own purposes, but it is still a sanctuary for the individual, and at least for this reason, it should be preserved:

> [Mr. Rice and I] should like to think that for future generations there will be, as there was for us, a vast unbroken wilderness, abundant with wild life, to refresh both the mind and the eye . . . The wilderness did more than heal my lungs . . . While it dwarfed me by its immensity and made me conscious of my insignificance, yet it made me aware of the importance of being an individual, capable of thinking and feeling not what was expected of me, but only what my own reasoning told me was true. It taught me fortitude and self-reliance, and with its tranquility it bestowed upon me something which would sustain me as long as I lived: a sense of the freshness and the wonder which life in natural surroundings daily brings and a joy in the freedom and beauty and peace that exist in a world apart from human beings. (220-221)

To conclude, tuberculosis not only provided for each of these patients the necessity to retreat to a natural–or at least rural–environment, but it created a lens through which to look upon that space. While Trudeau and Reben embraced and celebrated the possibilities that nature could bring to consumptives, Stevenson found little pleasure in

either the climate or the landscape. Chalmers was inclined to believe that Stevenson's disillusionment with the Adirondacks was motivated by his lack of interest in sport, and Reben proved that for some people, hunting was not a prerequisite to develop a meaningful relationship with nature. Though not as intensely as Reben, Crapsey refused to distance herself from natural processes, and fostered ambivalent feelings over the implications of such a position, for accepting one's role within the cycles of nature could dangerously lead to a passive acceptance of death as fate. Crapsey dwelled on the cryptic messages of nature, containing and condensing them into restrained cinquain metrics. For Reben, on the other hand, nature's messages were transparent. Each of the writings we have considered above answers to a different perspective emanating from the same circumstance, proving that wilderness eludes an objective definition and is instead based on the subjectivity of experience.

### 4.8.- Epilogue: Twentieth-Century and Contemporary Adirondack Writing

The content that has been explained so far can only serve as an introduction to Adirondack literary history. As I mentioned in the beginning, the selection of the texts above has unfortunately been done at the expense of leaving out a substantial number of other crucial writings of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Heir to the wilderness aesthetic of these periods, Adirondack writing in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries maintains for the most part the same environmental concerns and the search for defining the individual's place in nature. The circumstances change, of course, but some of the subjects depicted in twentieth-century writing appear as acute versions of previous issues: the power of modern technology alienates man to a point far beyond the effects of nineteenth-century materialism and industrialism; the automobile initiates a new, booming stage in the tourism industry which makes "Murray's Rush" look insignificant; forestry and conservation are no longer practices intended for local, state, or national resource sustainability, but can now as well be measured through global impact; and despite the secularization of muscular Christianity, new forms of spirituality resulting from the 1960s and 1970s back-to-nature movement supply Americans with an alternative–perhaps more personal–communion with nature.

As a result of the complex environmental politics that developed throughout the century and the new literary schools and trends, Adirondack literature ramified into different directions. To illustrate the contemporary literary, environmental, and socio-cultural concerns I have interviewed three of the most prominent Adirondack writers today: Philip Terrie, Neal Burdick, and Alice Wolf Gilborn. But before that, let us take a schematic look at some of the writers which can today be considered as part of the Adirondack canon:

- The shift to the modern environmental aesthetic (see Philip Terrie's interview below) can be credited to Henry Abbott, whose pieces written from 1914 to 1932 were finally compiled in *The Birch Bark Books of Henry Abbott* (1980). Abbot consolidated a new trend in Adirondack nature writing free from the opulence of romanticists, in an attempt to articulate the crude–yet wondrous–objectivity inherent to the ways of nature.
- Several writers emerge as Adirondack historians: Alfred Lee Donaldson publishes *A History of the Adirondacks* in 1921; Joseph Grady publishes *The*

*Adirondacks: Fulton Chain – Big Moose Region* in 1933; Craig Gilborn publishes *Durant: The Fortunes and Woodland Camps of a Family in the Adirondacks* in 1981; Barbara McMartin publishes *Hides, Hemlocks and Adirondack History* (1992) and *The Great Forest of the Adirondacks* (1994), among several other works; and Philip Terrie first publishes *Contested Terrain* in 1997. (See item 2 of Guiding Students' Discussion for more on Adirondack histories and historiography.)

- Theodore Dreiser reached widespread fame with *An American Tragedy* (1925), based on the murder of Grace Brown in the hands of her boyfriend Chester Gillette in Big Moose Lake (fictionalized in the novel through the characters of Roberta and Clyde). The Brown murder, which had scandalized the Adirondack townspeople back in 1906, would again be resuscitated eighty years later with Craig Brandon's *Murder in the Adirondacks* (1986), which explored the details of the case and Dreiser's fictionalized reconstruction of the events.
- Interest in the Adirondack Cottage Sanatorium continued. In 1947, Dorothy Palmer Hines published *No Wind of Healing*, a novel revolving around a group of friends living in Saranac. Using interior monologues and passages bordering on stream of consciousness, the novel skips around the inner world of the patients, their friends, and spouses, creating a vortex where feelings such as pain, love, resentment, and indifference contrast the outer world of quietness and superficiality.
- Robert Marshall and later Paul Schaefer stand out as two of the most ardent advocates of the conservation and preservation of the Adirondacks. Marshall and his brother George, along with their guide Herbert Clark, climbed all of the Adirondack high peaks in the 1920s, marking the beginning of the Adirondack 46-ers, the chief climbing club of the region. Both Marshall and Schaefer were active figures in the preservation and management of the Forest Preserve and published countless pieces on the subject.
- Anne LaBastille, one of the most acclaimed Adirondack writers, publishes four autobiographies that chronologically follow her life from her divorce to her hermit lifestyle in the wilderness for more than twenty years. The saga includes *Woodswoman* (1976), *Woodswoman II* (1987), *Woodswoman III* (1997), and *Woodswoman IIII* (2003).
- Joyce Carol Oates stretched the Adirondacks' literary possibilities all the way to magic realism and the gothic tradition in *Bellefleur* (1980), a novel on the trans-generational damnation of the Bellefleur clan. Reminiscent of Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Bellefleur* recapitulates Adirondack history from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century through a labyrinth of enigmatic characters who pass from generation to generation an unnamed trauma that seems to be rooter in the cursed land.
- Russel Banks earns a space in the Adirondack historical novel genre with works such as *Cloudsplitter* (1998), the story of the abolitionist John Brown from the perspective of one of his sons, and more recently, *The Reserve* (2008), a suspense novel set in the Adirondacks of the 1930s which experiments with noir literature conventions.
- Bill McKibben writes several non-fiction books on conservation and environmental ethics in America, with particular concern about global warming, sustainable resource use, and the effects of modern technology over man's relationship to nature. Some of his works include *The Death of Nature* (1990), *The Age of Missing Information* (1992), *Hope, Human and Wild: True Stories of*

*Living Lightly on Earth* (1995), *Enough: Staying Human in an Engineered Age* (2003), and *Wandering Home* (2005).

## TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH PHILIP G. TERRIE
## MARCH 18, 2010

Philip G. Terrie is the writer of *Forever Wild: A Cultural History of Wilderness in the Adirondacks* (1985; second edition 1994), *Wildlife and Wilderness: A History of Adirondack Mammals* (1994), and *Contested Terrain* (1997; second edition 2008). He is emeritus professor of English, American culture studies, and environmental studies at Bowling Green State University.

**CLAUDIA ALONSO:** Are you originally from the Adirondacks?

**PHILIP TERRIE:** I'm not originally from the Adirondacks; I grew up in West Virginia. I came to the central Adirondacks the summer after I graduated from high school to work at a camp on Long Lake and I just fell in love with the area right from the start. After college I worked at the Adirondack Museum for a couple of years.

**C.A.:** You were assistant curator at the museum, right?

**P.T.:** That's right. Now I live in Michigan. This semester I'm working north of the Adirondacks, in Potsdam.

I wanted to be an academic, and those jobs are hard to find in the United States. So I ended up teaching in Ohio and when I retired from that I moved to Michigan. I'm hoping someday I'll return to New York State.

**C.A.:** Did you always want to do environmental writing and research?

**P.T.:** Well, I worked at the museum and became very familiar with the history of the area, and I became intrigued by it. Then eventually I ended up in graduate school working on a Ph.D. in American studies. Most of my graduate work was on American literature and some cultural history. I decided I wanted to do my dissertation on the Adirondacks, and that's what became my first book, *Forever Wild.*

**C.A.:** Oh, *Forever Wild* was your dissertation?

**P.T.:** Yes, it was. It took me five years to rewrite it for the book. *Forever Wild* was published in 1985 and then there's a Syracuse University Press paperback issued in 1994.

**C.A.:** In your books *Forever Wild* and *Contested Terrain* you are very consistent with the idea that history has proven that "wilderness," rather than an objective entity, is a

subjective concept dependent on a certain shared cultural mentality of a specific period. In this sense have you been influenced by Roderick Nash? How else has he influenced your work?

**P.T.:** The dissertation is largely the model of Roderick Nash's *Wilderness and the American Mind* applied to the Adirondacks. The dissertation stops in 1895 with the "forever wild" provision. I rewrote it and added three more chapters for the book. Still, it was very much inspired by Roderick Nash. I think that what I am doing in *Forever Wild* is very much along the lines of Nash.

**C.A.:** On the one hand you focus on how religion and philosophy have shaped evolving understandings of nature and on the other you also attend to the notion of utility, what the wilderness is good for. Can you comment on this?

**P.T.:** When I talk about utility, I'm talking about how other people see utility in nature and how often that is antithetical to wilderness values. I'm trying to contextualize the attitude toward wilderness and put it into relation with other views that are at work at the same time. For instance, in the Adirondacks there is the utilitarian view that sees the protection only necessary for watershed protection. This is an important policy move, but it really doesn't have anything to do with wilderness. It's part of the history of the region; it's extremely important in terms of what policies and what protections are put in place, so that's why it's in the story.

**C.A.:** In *Forever Wild* you mention two shifting approaches in the modern wilderness aesthetic: a) the "spirituality of nature" reminiscent of romanticism (though with a much less elevated vocabulary), and b) the awareness of nature having a "nexus of balance, process, and dynamism" when undisturbed by human interference. How is the active role of being the one who projects that spirituality negotiated with the more passive role of being a beholder of that process and dynamism? In other words, are writers today inclined to fit within that pattern or is there always some form of resistance or superiority over nature?

**P.T.:** That's a good question. I think you really find a huge variety of positions on that spectrum. I think certainly the romantic position persists. I see that in a lot of students who see nature as a sort of spiritual retreat. I think the idea of the place where nature's processes work out appeals to a lot of people with scientific training and also to those of us without scientific training. But I think there's probably a bit of tension between those two sometimes; sometimes it's a very healthy tension that just leads to a deeper sense of relationship. And I think a lot of writers sort of tilt one way or the other on that spectrum and not many people really put them all together. Bill McKibben, for example, is an interesting case in that he sort of talks about the Adirondacks as a spiritual retreat but when he gets on the topic of climate change, which is his main subject, he takes a very utilitarian position. He says, "If we don't change our ways, we are going to suffer. Our relationship with nature will be catastrophically altered." He has a very practical approach to his impulse for protection, and he delivers it in a very characteristic American mode: he's in the tradition of the Jeremiads, which sort of says "if you people don't change your ways you're all going to hell." In his case, McKibben is saying, "Earth will *become* hell if we don't change our ways." There's a long tradition of that in American environmental writing: George Perkins Marsh, Rachel

Carson, and others, who say we should protect nature not because it's spiritually important, but because it's our home. And if we don't, we're in trouble.

**C.A.:** Since you wrote the book, have you noticed any new characteristics/approaches in the modern environmental aesthetics?

**P.T.:** Not really, no. The Adirondacks, oddly, is not the center of writing that it ought to be. We have some writers active here, but I don't think we have anything like the wealth of writing that the Adirondacks had in the nineteenth century.

I'm thinking about writers whom I admire and who work in the Adirondacks. Ed Kanze, for instance, is a very good writer. He is, I think, on the side toward understanding nature as process and dynamism –he's got a good scientific understanding. And he certainly talks about how understanding that leads to moments of spiritual redemption, repose and restoration. If you're interested in Adirondack writing I would really recommend that you look up Ed Kanze –he's working now and he had a book out about two years ago. But I don't think there's anything terribly new there. He's a very good writer, but I don't think anybody in the Adirondacks is blazing new paths in writing –maybe nobody is anywhere.

**C.A.:** Well I guess it's also that these things take time, and a twenty-five year span is really not too long.

**P.T.:** Yes, and also when you're in the midst of something it's hard to identify a moment of shift. But Kanze is a very good writer, and McKibben is a good writer.

**C.A.:** There are a lot of scientists that are writers.

**P.T.:** Oh, American scientists can't write.

**C.A.:** Or at least some writers who have a scientific background. Anne LaBastille comes to mind.

**P.T.:** Yes, she has a Ph.D. in ecology, I think. I think her best writing is not about the Adirondacks but about Central America. She's written a couple of books about doing scientific work in Central America. I find her Adirondack stuff very derivative and ordinary; I'm not impressed.

**C.A.:** In the same line as the previous question, are there still vestiges of the dichotomy between the sublime and the beautiful in contemporary writing?

**P.T.:** I think the vocabulary has changed, but the idea of the transcendent experience in the presence of spectacular scenery is still one of the major traditions in our writing today. From coast to coast, all over American nature writing, the cult of the sublime and the beautiful continues. I think they tend to merge, as they did in the nineteenth century, into the cult of the picturesque, in the searching for scenes. A lot of American nature writing continues to be like that. Edward Abbey is a good example. He's a terrific writer; as a prose stylist he's one of the best writers we're ever going to find. But he seems very uninterested in nature as process; you don't get any of the science in Abbey. He's trained as a philosopher and he's interested in what nature looks like and how he feels in nature, not in how nature works.

**C.A.:** Does scenic appreciation have a relevant role in the notion of preservation today? In other words, is it a substantial argument for environmental policies?

**P.T.:** Yes, I think it is. In the Adirondacks, the vocabulary gets a little bit dreary at times. Now we talk about "viewsheds": it's everything you can see from a mountaintop or from a pull-off on the highway, etc. It's an awkward, ugly word, but it is part of the discourse here right now. For example, we're very concerned about people building houses on ridgelines now. Protections for the ridgelines are very weak, and people are building houses up on high ground that you can see from the highways –they really stick up and they very much intrude on the scene. So that tradition is still pretty much at work.

**C.A.:** You also describe how in the late nineteenth century "preservation" was not understood as it is today; that it was generally hard for a utilitarian state of mind to conceive of a wilderness that could in some way be useful for society to be left untouched. In your words, it was "a debate between different kinds of exploiters." Is preservation still deemed as a "waste" by certain groups?

**P.T.:** It's awfully hard to generalize on values. But I think that in the Adirondacks it just sounds like the same old debate still going on. You have the people who see the Adirondacks as a place to make money, and then there are those who see it as a place to get away, to achieve spiritual transcendence. So there are plenty of people out there who see the Forest Preserve as a waste of resources; they think we should open it up for logging and mining and get some profit generated by these places. I think that generally over the last century the numbers have moved toward protection, but right now in New York and in the United States we are in the midst of the recession and it is a lot harder to make the argument for preservation than it was ten years ago. We're still making it, but the resistance to it is pretty strong right now. There's a lot anti-preservation talk in the Adirondacks right now.

**C.A.:** Are these anti-preservationists assembled in organizations?

**P.T.:** Yes. They have websites, they write on blogs, they write letters to the paper, they try to influence the legislature, etc. The State doesn't have any money right now, so they can't do anything. So there are some opportunities for protection in the Adirondacks that the State cannot seize because it's completely broke. The State is deep in debt; we have a major economic crisis in the United States.

So a lot of the debate in the Adirondacks right now seems terribly familiar. We argue about several different things, but the forces line up in largely the same way they have for a hundred years.

**C.A.:** Are the boundaries between preservation and conservation clearer today?

**P.T.:** No, I would say not. Sometimes that's a distinction that could be a little bit misleading. I think it's probably better off not to use terms like that. We should talk about specific situations and what people have in mind. But there certainly is an extreme wilderness-preservation mentality that is still present and is still much part of the political scene. We also have an intermediate ground which we could say has a more conservationist view –more utilitarian, wise sustainable use. And then there's the old cut-and-run mentality, which seems to be much quieter. The more exploitative position

has come to realize and understand that you can't just cut and run and not mind the consequences –around here anyway. In other parts of the country where there's strip mining, mountaintop removal and things like that, the old exploitation mindset is very much alive. But I think in the Adirondacks just about all loggers are going about their business in a pretty good way.

**C.A.:** So that kind of answers my next question, which was whether you find that writers are more inclined toward preservation or conservation. We should evaluate each case separately, then.

**P.T.:** I think so; those two positions could be too much of a pigeon-hole.

**C.A.:** You also talk about the image of loggers in *Forever Wild* and how they were set in contrast with the ideal of the scientific forester to manage the land. What is the public's perception of lumbermen today?

**P.T.:** It varies widely. I think a lot of Americans, generally, are not really well informed. There are some pretty negative views on logging, and these people don't think about the fact that they completely depend on logging for their paper, their construction materials… Our entire culture depends on wood products. But I think that the more people think about it, the more they realize that we must have logging, and they look at the way it's done –there's a lot of variety of logging in this country, and as I said, in the Adirondacks it is done fairly well and it generally gets better as we move forward and forestry practices improve. But I think that a lot of people who don't know about logging will just look at a cutting area and just think that it is disgusting and horrible. The fact is that they tend to be a little uninformed. Logging is disruptive and it is inevitable; but the way that it is practiced here it is minimally disruptive and the forest recovers very quickly. I have no problem with logging if it's done properly and in the right place.

**C.A.:** In your books you talk about the conflict between the situation and conditions of year-round Adirondackers and the legislative measures managed by the elite. It seems to me that a sort of picaresque tradition emerged in the writings of people reacting against "Big Brothers." Byron-Curtiss, for example, conned game wardens and members of the Adirondack League Club and more recently, the Adirondack Park Agency has seemed to be the object of criticism. What is the situation with the Park Agency today?

**P.T.:** It's terrible. There's a huge level of hostility to the Park Agency in the Adirondacks. I think there's more hostility now than there was a few years ago, when things sort of seemed to be calming down. I don't know what is going to happen with that; but is there hostility and conflict? –Yes. There's a very strong sense among some of the local people that the Park Agency is an elitist, tyrannical, out-of-control government bureaucracy against which they have got to defend themselves.

**C.A.:** How does membership in the Park Agency work?

**P.T.:** The Park Agency is appointed by the governor. There are strict guidelines: there have to be a certain number of people from inside the Park and a certain number of people from outside the Park, and then there are members from the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Department of Health, and from another couple of

state agencies, and then the commissioner, who is an automatic member. So the Park Agency generally reflects the wishes of the governor who appointed the members. These members stay on for staggered terms so no governor–unless he is in for a long time–appoints all members of the Park Agency.

There is a seat up right now. One of the in-park member's term is up and the governor has nominated a local businessman to be the next member at the Park Agency. He is identified with the environmental community –he serves on the board of one of the major environmental organizations, so local government and business interest are adamantly opposed to his appointment. He doesn't become completely appointed until he is confirmed by the State Senate. So the Senate is sort of at a limbo right now: some people want him and some people don't. They haven't come to a vote yet; they're still maneuvering in the hallways. Of course another story here is that the New York Senate is particularly dysfunctional; they can't get anything done. So it may be a while before they have a vote on his appointment. So to answer your question: the Park Agency is a very hot topic in the Adirondacks.

**C.A.:** Over what lands does the Park Agency have authority? Can you give me a couple current examples in which the Park Agency has caused a lot of controversy with the locals?

**P.T.:** They have authority over pretty much everything. They have authority over the way the State runs state lands and over a lot of what happens on private lands. Two examples –one for each:

The Department of Environmental Conservation has recently come up with a new plan for snowmobile trails which the Park Agency can either approve or not approve. My feeling is they probably will not approve it because they say the State is permitting too many miles of snowmobile trails in the Adirondacks on state land. That's a complicated situation; I'm trying to reduce it to fairly digestible terms. So the Park Agency will be voting sometime in the next few months probably on the snowmobile plan.

Another example, on private lands, is that they have rewritten the guidelines for boathouses. Some people have rather large docks –they've been getting bigger and bigger recently, with their large decks on top and things like that. Some people find them to be an aesthetic intrusion along the shoreline, so the Park Agency is trying to write guidelines that limit the kinds of things people can do with boathouses. That has caused a huge uproar. You have the local government saying, "You can't tell people what they can or cannot do with their docks!" And you have other people saying, "The shorelines are being destroyed by overbuilding!" So the Park Agency is taking a certain line on this. Some people want to protect the beautiful shorelines and the aesthetics of the scenery. And other people see it as a terrible intrusion on private property rights. So that has yet to be resolved; it's still going on.

**C.A.:** Are you active in the Park Agency Debate?

**P.T.:** I have opinions on everything. Right now I'm working on a lecture I'm going to give next week on the state of the Adirondacks. Frankly, I think the Park Agency and environmentalists sometimes get bogged in on trivial matters such as this boathouse issue or the snowmobile trails issue. I think we should pay attention to the bigger issues instead of to one more mile of snowmobile trail next to a highway. Snowmobiling, after all, is very important to the local economy, and the local economy is not doing well. I'd

like to see a little bit more help to the local economy, but not one that interferes with the wilderness areas. So I think both sides have built it up into such a symbolic issue that they're not really talking to each other. And in the case of the boathouses, I think that some of them are too large and I'd like to see them controlled.

**C.A.:** Has the tourism gone down in the last couple of summers?

**P.T.:** I've talked to people –local businessmen, people at the Adirondack Museum, and people from other attractions– and last summer was not a good summer for local business. We're in a state of recession; maybe it will be better next summer. But the local economy here is fragile, so any decline will be noticed.

**C.A.:** What are the main sources of income in the Adirondacks?

**P.T.:** The number one source of employment is state and local government (if you include school teachers). Tourism is the next, and logging used to be the third but I don't think it's even on the map anymore. So once you consider state and local government and tourism, there are just a few other things that have a low position on the scale. And now, since the State is in such a crisis economically, it's cutting back: they're shutting down offices, they're shutting down parks, and a lot of people who work for state and local government are losing their jobs. So what that's going to do to local economy is not going to be good. The State of New York is a mess, I have to tell you!

**C.A.:** I found your comments on the change in the perception of carnivores in the modern wilderness aesthetic very insightful. You write that "the presence in the Adirondacks of species that previous generations had done all they could to kill off had become an aesthetic necessity, as well as a measure of the judgment and morality of mankind." Do you think that they still hold this doubly symbolic quality?

**P.T.:** I'd have to say yes: they still do hold this doubly symbolic quality. I think there's a fascination with the prey animals: wolves, mountain lions. There's endless speculation as to whether or not there are mountain lions still living in the Adirondacks; an awful lot of people are sure they do, but without the evidence it just seems that they want them to. That's an indication that the carnivore exercises a huge power over the imagination. The same with eagles –everybody loves eagles and everybody wants to see eagles. There's also a lot of talk about reintroducing wolves, despite the fact that we don't even know what kind of wolves lived here. I think that the interest in predatory animals increases everyday; more and more people see them as important in a very symbolic way. There's some American nature writer–I think he's a scientist–that used the term "charismatic megafauna," by which he explains why we care so much more about grizzly bears than we do about little salamanders, when in fact they are all important for the way the whole thing works. But you have to emphasize the "charismatic megafauna" to get people to pay attention, even though the little critters are just as important and their absence is as much of a loss. I think the symbolic character of the large animals–particularly the prey animals–continues and grows every day.

**C.A.:** So how does civilization go from this "hatred" toward predators in previous centuries to this present-day fascination?

**P.T.:** I think you have to go back at least to the seventeenth century, when the idea of wilderness itself was feared and detested, and now we have a growing, substantial number of Americans who love it and want it. Our attitudes have changed about these animals, and to a certain extent this is because they are gone –something becomes of value when it's rare. And it also has to do with the fact that most Americans don't live on farms anymore. If you live on a farm and you have some wolf out there eating your sheep, you're not going to be very sympathetic toward it. But if you live in a city, then the wolf stands for that wild country that is kind of alien, exotic, and appealing because you don't know it very well. It is then that the wolf becomes much more appealing. So because America has become a much more urban country, things that we associate with the wild become fascinating because they are exotic. I also think television has a huge influence –all the nature shows are always tracking wolves in the Arctic, or Yellowstone, or something like that, and people find those fascinating. So a lot of the interest is armchair-distance interest.

I think that more people understand that predation is a part of nature. They used to hate the wolf because the wolf ate the deer; the deer is something that seems calm, peaceful, and familiar, while the wolf is fierce and bloody. The more that people–some people, anyway–come to understand that nature itself is a complicated system largely dependent on predation, the more they come to appreciate every part.

So I think the appreciation of predators is a function of a lot of different things. The one I would emphasize is the rise of ecological thinking, which has got a long way to go–most Americans have not gotten there–but in certain quarters there's a growing sense that nature is not just scenery, but also a process. And the big predators are part of the process.

**C.A.:** In the debate about the reintroduction of wolves, are potential wolf attacks an argument for not reintroducing them?

**P.T.:** Yeah, people have raised that argument; I've heard it brought up in meetings. Reintroducing wolves is only a matter of discussion right now because actually doing it would be very expensive and no one has got the money for that. But some people think, "We have got to bring them back!" while other people say "I don't want those around my children; they'll eat them!" So you have all these sides everywhere. I have heard people say that it would be dangerous for their children if we had wolves in the Adirondacks.

**C.A.:** Is there actual danger of wolf attacks? I have always had the impression that there have been cases of bear attacks, but not so much of wolves.

**P.T.:** The black bears of the East are harmless; they're nothing to be afraid of. The grizzlies of the West are much more dangerous.

I read somewhere that in the United States there has never been a case of a non-rabid wolf attacking a human being. They're scared of people. Last fall there was a case of some coyotes attacking a young woman on Cape Breton Island, on a trail that I've hiked on. The eastern coyote has wolf genes; they're bigger and much more "wolfy" than the western one. That's the only case of death ever in North American history due to an attack. And she was apparently young, and healthy, and fit… It's just absolutely inexplicable.

**C.A.:** Maybe they had rabies?

**P.T.:** I read somewhere that some scientists who examined the way it happened said that the fact that the coyotes were acting as a group is almost sure evidence that they weren't rabid. Nobody understands. I'm not terribly worried about them because it's the only case ever, but we have to consider that animal culture does change, particularly among the canids. Wolf packs that live in different river valleys in the Arctic are actually very different from those down in the next valley because they have cultural positions they pass on among themselves. So wolf behavior can change, and so can coyote behavior.

**C.A.:** The ending sentence to *Forever Wild* is that "today . . . New Yorkers have not made up their collective mind about what to do with the wilderness or the Adirondacks." What is the situation in 2010?

**P.T.:** It's exactly the same: the old debates continue, the sides rearrange, and the issues that we write about change a little bit. But right now in the Adirondacks there's nothing but contention: arguments, disputes, debates… nothing is certain. We end up focusing on different things now and then, and it's not entirely predictable who's going to be on what side. We certainly do have endless debates, which can get very heated sometimes, about what we are going to do with the Adirondacks. It's an endlessly fascinating story.


*From left to right: writers Neal Burdick, Roger Mitchell, Philip Terrie, and Maurice Kenny at the Old Forge Library on August 18, 2009.*

**INTERVIEW WITH NEAL BURDICK**
**AUGUST 18, 2009. OLD FORGE LIBRARY**

Neal Burdick is an essayist, reviewer, poet, and fiction writer. He has published several pieces in *Adirondack Life*, *Blueline*, and *Adirondack Explorer* and edited *A Century Wild 1885-1995* (1985), in which he also appears as essayist. He co-edited the third edition of *The Adirondack Reader* alongside Paul Jamieson and *Living North Country* (2001) with Natalia Rachel Singer. Mr. Burdick is also editor-in-chief of *Adirondac Magazine* and St. Lawrence University's associate director of University Communications and university editor.

**C.A.:** What would you say are certain common threads or stylistic preferences that are shared by current Adirondack writers? Do you think there are a set of defining characteristics of Adirondack literature?

**N.B.:** You're talking about contemporary writers.

**C.A.:** Yes.

**N.B.:** I guess if there is one it's kind of a balance between what I might call nature writing and sort of human interest writing. One thing I think distinguishes the Adirondacks in the US and maybe in the world is the way that humans and nature mix, partly because of the ways the Park is defined and partly because of the history of the place. Human existence and the natural world aren't really separated very much in the Adirondacks; they really intertwine and I think you really see that in the writing, both as a stylistic thing and as a thematic sort of subject matter. There's a real blending of the human and the natural. It doesn't really jump out when you read the literature, unless you read it closely and unless you read a lot of it. Then you'll see how there isn't much separation between the natural and the human.

**C.A.:** Would you say there are some prime environmental concerns that writers today–writers including yourself–share? What would be these concerns? Are Adirondack writers very articulate about environmental issues?

**N.B.:** Well, to answer the second part of that question first –yes, I think that's something that Adirondack writers have really focused on and spent a lot of time and thought on. They have done this for a long time, not just contemporarily but all through history. Now, what was the first part of the question again?

**C.A.:** Some examples of what would be some of the main environmental issues that are going on.

**N.B.:** Right. Well, I guess the biggest one is one that's been going on for a while, and that's what the proper balance between wilderness preservation and–for lack of a better term–economic development is. The wilderness preservation movement in the Adirondacks goes back a long way and the Adirondacks are sort of a leading light in American environmental history in terms of wilderness preservation. That's been a strong thread for a hundred and twenty years or so in the Adirondacks. But there's also

the counter-pressure to harvest the wilderness' resources or to develop the land in the Adirondacks. There's this really kind of exciting contradiction there that I think a lot of writers have tried to explain, or sort out in their own minds, or throw a light on… Again, this goes back a hundred and twenty years, but particularly in more recent times there's been for example more pressure for vacation-home development. People want to have a vacation home in the Adirondacks on a beautiful lake with woods around, but how does that change the nature of the woods? So that's a theme that's been very strong in Adirondack writing. One of the questions you sent me was do writers lean toward the preservation side of that, and I would say yes. There's a strong leaning toward the preservation, or the conservation, or the environmental side on that whole argument. So a lot of the writing you'll see about the Adirondacks today deals with defending the wilderness or defending preservation of the wilderness. In so much of the world there is pressure not to preserve wilderness; wilderness occupies something less than one per cent of the world's land surface –inhabitable land surface; we sort of discount the Antarctic, for example. So there isn't much of it, you know. We feel it needs defense, so there is a lot of that kind of writing contemporarily.

**C.A.:** The Adirondacks is very special because of this kind of vague "forever wild" clause, and it's not too specific of what it means to be "forever wild," or that's the impression that I've got. Do you think this amendment has been mystified in any way in literature? Have writers tried to project their ideal of this "forever wild" clause through their literature?

**N.B.:** If they have it's been perhaps unintentional. Actually I don't think it's vague at all; I think it's very specific. It's pretty clearly spelled out what can be done and what can't be done. There's been a lot of argument about that ever since it was implemented. But I think most writers, particularly the fiction writers and poets and writers like the ones we have here tonight [Philip Terrie, Maurice Kenny, Roger Mitchell] are more concerned about the idea of the wilderness than about legislation. Specific references to the law, to the "forever wild" amendment, or any other regulations don't turn up a whole lot in literature about the Adirondacks. Phil Terrie, who you met, does a lot of writing on intellectual history. In one of his books, *Contested Terrain*, he talks a lot about the whole political storm around the "forever wild" amendment and around Adirondack Park Agency land use regulations. But I don't think he would consider his writing literature; he would consider his writing history. By literature I mean reflective essay over poetry or short story, that kind of thing. I'm sort of defining separate terrains of writing here.

**C.A.:** You have a piece in the book *A Century Wild* where you focus on four great men –Verplanck Colvin, George Perkins Marsh, Franklin B. Hough and Charles Sprague Sargent. The "forever wild" clause or amendment probably couldn't have been done without their actions, which were very revolutionary at the time. Do you think that now there may be some similar actions that in time may be considered as revolutionary –not just sticking to writers but to general Adirondack preserving policies, maybe?

**N.B.:** I think probably the one thing that will go down in history as being of sort of equal importance as the "forever wild" amendment is the passage of the Public and Private Land Master Plans in the early 1970s and the creation of the Adirondack Park Agency. By now this isn't terribly recent; it's sort of relatively recent. But what that did was create a set of land use guidelines or laws that in a sense put some of the

philosophical ideas of the "forever wild" amendment into practical application. In other words, you can or cannot do this with your property. And to Americans, who have put a large value on freedom and property (freedom to use their land as they wish –I mean that's one reason we came here from Europe), that was hard to swallow for a lot of people. Phil talks a lot about this in his book; there's a lot of ongoing enmity about a State body telling people how they can use their land. On the other hand it has helped preserve the environment in the Adirondacks–not just the wilderness environment but the overall physical environment–against second-home or vacation-home development and other resource extraction during the economic boom period of the end of the twentieth century. So you've got this pro-con thing: it did good things but it also really angered a lot of people. The short answer to your question is: the two most significant things that happened in terms of how people treat the Adirondacks are the "forever wild" clause being passed in 1894, and the Master Plan for the properties and the Adirondack Park Agency to implement that Plan in the early 1970s. I don't think of anything more recent than that that had as big an impact.

**C.A.:** What about the wolf recovery program and the big carnivore issue? Is that a different matter?

**N.B.:** That's certainly been an issue of concern for a lot of people. Again it's one of those that has passionate arguments on both sides, for and against. But I think it hasn't had quite the overall impact on many people that the State Land Use regulations have, because it really affects a small number of people who are quite vocal about it. But the regulations that tell you how big a lot you have to have to put a house on or whatever – that really affects everybody.

**C.A.:** To get back to writers a little bit, what would you say are perhaps common myths or stereotypes that have been bred in Adirondack literature? For example, in the *Adirondack Reader* you have a whole section dedicated to guides. Do you think this guide myth has been exploited beyond literature and maybe some local businesses have profited from the myth in itself? Could you tell me of other myths or archetypes that have been recurrent in Adirondack literature?

**N.B.:** Well, you've put your finger on the biggest one, which is the guide. As you know, if you've looked into some of the writings the guides were really romanticized in the nineteenth century, and sort of made into these super-human mythological figures. This caused a lot of people to be disappointed when they found out what they were really like; just to see they were human and had human failings like the rest of us. But yes, that was certainly exploited for profit by businesses, particularly the hotels. The second half of the nineteenth century is when the vacation industry really took off in the Adirondacks and people would come to these big huge old hotels for several weeks, maybe the whole summer (as opposed to the one-week vacation today where they pop in the car and go to the amusement parks or whatever). And so the hotels employed guides who would then take people on fishing excursions, or hikes, or hunting trips or whatever. The hotels in their promotional literature would play up the myths of these guides as super-human people who would always hunt a moose down for you, or always catch twenty-five huge trout, or tell you a fantastic tale around the campfire. Supposedly they were always polite, and cooperative, and wonderful, but in reality some of them were not. So that image was really played up for profit, including pictures and paintings of them in the hotels' brochures.

The other one, and it's somewhat similar to the guide myth is the hermit myth. Noah John Rondeau was the most commercialized of the hermits. They were mythologized for the ideal of an independent lifestyle free from the rules of society and the laws of government, and for being totally self-sufficient, living very close to nature. Most of them were dirty antisocial people who didn't really want anything to do with the rest of the world anyway. That was the reality. Particularly through some of the writings, including some in the *Reader*, they were mythologized again as the ideal American in the sense of being totally free: totally free of laws, and regulations, and guidelines, and social expectations, and all that sort of thing. Rondeau actually kind of commercialized himself. He printed up postcards of himself and went to sportsmen shows in New York and would sign autographs and do that sort of thing for money. If you think about it it's a bit of a contradiction because that's exactly the kind of thing he and any other self-respecting hermit would try to separate themselves from. So those are the two myths I think of and you can sort of see how there are some parallels: the same type of self-sufficient, independent person.

**C.A.:** Male, of course.

**N.B.:** Yes.

**C.A.:** This brings me to another topic. As an editor, do you notice differences between Adirondack male and female writers? Or do you think that they practically make the same thematic and stylistic choices?

**N.B.:** Yes, I do. I don't really see a difference. Maybe a more perceptive reader than I would see a difference, but I don't. There are certainly more women writers working today than there were in the past in the Adirondacks. If you saw the previous edition of the *Adirondack Reader* you would see there were fewer women writers in it than there are now because many of the writers we added for this edition are women. But I think that's more a case of women becoming more acceptable to the whole world as writers, which I'm tremendously grateful for because there's some tremendous writing out there being done by women. Betsy Folwell, for example, wrote a book called *Short Carries*. It's a collection of short essays. It's just tremendous stuff. So a lot of new writing about or from or in the Adirondacks is by women. But again I think that reflects more a trend throughout society, throughout the world of literature, with more women being in positions of teaching and publishing.

**C.A.:** Yes. When I read Amy Godine, Barbara McMartin, Anne LaBastille, for example, it initially didn't seem to me like gender was a huge issue. It's kind of refreshing in a way because Adirondack writing seemed a lot more homogeneous.

**N.B.:** I'm glad you thought that. I was thinking about Anne LaBastille when you asked me the question. She writes a description of a storm she was caught in. I wondered at some point, would a man have written that differently? During the storm she was concerned about taking care of her dogs, while maybe a man would have been more concerned about taking care of his cabin. But I don't know that; that's speculation. You know, we have dogs and I love them and I would be concerned about them too.

**C.A.:** You'd go for the dogs.

**N.B.:** Yes, exactly. You can rebuild the cabin but you can't put the dog back together if it gets hit by a tree [*laughs*]. So, you know, I don't know if a male writer in her same situation would have interpreted that storm–or written about it, or reflected upon it–differently. It's certainly possible, but I don't think the difference would be all that huge.

**C.A.:** I wanted to ask you about *Adirondac Magazine,* which is the Adirondack Mountain Club's main publication. How did you end up becoming editor in chief? There are many Adirondack publications and magazines (*Blueline, Adirondack Life*) going on; what is it that makes *Adirondac Magazine* different from other publications?

**N.B.:** Well, you asked how I got involved with it first. I've been there for over twenty-five years now and at one point they simply needed an editor and they knew that I did editing professionally, so they asked if I would do this and I said "Sure, why not." I had a young family at that point but they all said "O.K., go ahead." So I did. So it was really sort of very prosaic how I got involved with it. It was no big accomplishment or anything. The magazine really reflects the interests of the Club, which are recreation, education, and conservation, the latter a broad term for some of the things we talked about before (wise use of the resources in the Adirondacks and teaching about them). So it's very much a club-oriented and club-directed periodical. If I received some perfectly good article about the Adirondacks but didn't fit into one of those three overarching criteria, I would recommend that it be sent to *Adirondack Life,* or *Adirondack Explorer,* or perhaps *Blueline* if it were literature. I mean, we wouldn't publish a short story; I would send that to *Blueline.* We probably wouldn't publish a profile of a political figure of the Adirondacks; I would send that to *Adirondack Life* or *Adirondack Explorer*; in fact, I write for both. So the magazine's content really reflects the interests of the club.

**C.A.:** And just to top it off, I wanted to ask you about your poetry.

**N.B.:** I'm a minor poet, I guess. Maurice Kenny has been my mentor in poetry.

**C.A.:** Are you currently working on poetry or maybe on another book? Do you just focus on the Adirondacks?

**N.B.:** Pretty much on the Adirondacks, yeah. There's enough material here to keep me busy.

**C.A.:** Oh, definitely.

**N.B.:** And this is not my day job, anyway. I work full time at St. Lawrence University doing their publications. So all of this is what we in America call "moonlighting"; it's on top of my regular job. I've always got a few poems floating around in the back of my head. I've written maybe half a dozen, or published about a half a dozen and written maybe a few others. Now I've got a couple which are still sort of forming themselves in my mind. One of them deals with winter conditions, so I've got to wait for another winter to come before I can really go out and feel the cold air and the cold wind and turn that into words. In addition to that, Maurice and I are putting together an anthology. The anthology will be similar to my book *Living North Country*; it's a collection of essays interpreting what it's like to live in this region. And we're leaving writers to interpret that however they want. We want them to tell us what it's like to live here,

how it is different from any other place, what it means to them, how they feel about being here. We're just collecting content for that this fall, and we'll go to a publisher – the same one that did *Living North Country*. We do these things because there are a lot of people out there who want to express their feelings about living in this region and being here and they're able to –they have the talent. So we're giving them an outlet to do that. We don't make much money at all with these things; we do it more for the same reason that many artists do things for the love of it. Certainly there are a lot of professional musicians, and ballet dancers, and painters, but there are a lot that do it just for the fun of it without expecting to make a living, or to give others opportunities to do it, and so that's mainly why we do these books.

**C.A.:** That's great. Do you guys–the writers–feel like a family? I mean, you all know each other, right?

**N.B.:** We do, yes.

**C.A.:** There's a kind of collective group consciousness going on…

**N.B.:** There is, yes. We talk a lot about ideas to write about, and how to write about something, and about who´s publishing what now. We gathered a week ago for Author's Night in Long Lake; that was a wonderful time. There were about seventy-five writers there. I went with the *Adirondack Reader* and we sold about twelve books and I signed about twelve books in two hours, but that wasn't the best part of it. For me, the best part was seeing all these writers that I know and talking to them: "what are you working on now?" and "how's the family?" and that sort of thing. Because we do have this commonality –knowledge about the region and ability to turn that into words –so it was fun getting together and talking about that sort of thing.

**C.A.:** Thank you so much for your comments and for giving us some of your time.

**N.B.:** You're very welcome.

**INTERVIEW WITH ALICE WOLF GILBORN**
**AUGUST 20, 2009. MT. TABOR, VERMONT.**

*Writers Alice Wolf Gilborn and Craig Gilborn.*

Alice Wolf Gilborn is a novelist, essayist, poet and editor. In 1976 she published *What Do You Do With A Kinkajou?*, a book on her mother, Cee Wolf, and her recollections of her upbringing in Colorado. Her poetry appears in the collection *A North Country Quartet* (2006), and she has also published several articles and poems in *Adirondack Life, The Writer*, and *The Greenfield Review.* She is the founding editor of *Blueline*, the Adirondack literary magazine, and was Editor of Books and Publications for the Adirondack Museum from 1982 to 2000.

**C.A.:** You're originally from Colorado; first of all I wanted you to ask you how you came in contact with the Adirondacks, how you settled there and how it affected you as a writer? I know you always wanted to be a writer, from very early on.

**A.G.:** Yes, I did. I've always written; ever since I was a little girl, and I always imagined myself as a writer. The problem as you get older and you read more and you write more is that you see how much you don't know, so it kind of makes you wonder whether you can do it. But the Adirondacks offered me an opportunity to write, partly because of its isolation. I went there because my husband became director of the Adirondack Museum. And I also liked mountains; I was born near the Rocky Mountains, so I wasn't intimidated by the Adirondacks. It gave me an opportunity, I wasn't working then. There didn't seem to be too many people really writing, there

wasn't much literature that I could tell. I mean, there was older literature, but there wasn't a community of writers.

**C.A.:** What year was this?

**A.G.:** This was in 1972. I first started writing little articles for the newspaper, a weekly paper. That didn't last too long. And then I got pressed into service writing press releases for the Adirondack Museum. Eventually I became editor of the museum's newsletter and eventually editor of books and publications. I kept learning on the job. I thought there was a paucity of literary effort going on, and at that time I had this idea for my book *What Do You Do With A Kinkajou?* So it gave me the opportunity–especially during the winter, when there wasn't too much to do–to sit down and have some time to myself and to be able to try it.

**C.A.:** Was this around the time you started thinking about *Blueline*?

**A.G.:** Well, I finished *Kinkajou*, sent it around to publishers, and of course got many rejection slips. But there was an editor (I've forgotten the name of the publisher) who said, "Cut out everything but the horses. Keep the part about the horses."

**C.A.:** Really?

**A.G.:** I said, "Well, I don't know if I want to do that." And she said, "Well, I'll tell you what: I'll do you a favor. I'll introduce you to my agent in New York City." And she did. We took a wild ride from wherever I met her down to the Village in New York–I'll never forget that taxi ride–to meet this guy. His name was Knox Burger and he was all business, so of course I was intimidated by him. He read the manuscript–the first three chapters–and he sent them back to me and said, "this and this is good, this is not, etc. Take my suggestions from the first three chapters and write the rest of the book according to them, and I'll see what we can do with it." So I did it; it took me maybe another eight or nine months. Then I sent it back and he sold it in about a week. It taught me a lot about revisions, which proved useful as I became more and more of a book editor… It's a good tool.

**C.A.:** It's probably harder sometimes to revise than to actually start off the writing from scratch.

**A.G.:** Yes. So that was the story of *Kinkajou*. Then *Blueline* came along –I think it was 1979. I was teaching; I had a little course as a connection with North Country Community College. I was teaching in Blue Mountain Lake; it was just plain literature, I guess, I've forgotten really. There were about eight of us–eight people in class–and I remembered that in college we had a literary magazine and I said, "Why don't we start a magazine? I think we'd get a lot of people who might want to publish things." And we did; we just started it.

**C.A.:** You mentioned somewhere it was like a whimsy…

**A.G.:** It was. We had a friend type it up and I got one of the printers for the museum to print it cheaply. With Craig being the director we had to socialize, so we had a big party

and I sold subscriptions at the party to our friends. And that's how it started. We published it twice a year to begin with.

**C.A.:** So it was the first literary magazine of the region.

**A.G.:** Yes. Joe Bruchac–I don't know if you've heard of him; he's written a lot of Adirondack things and he lives right outside the Adirondack Park–had written a book on how to start and sustain a literary magazine. We followed the book, and he was very helpful. I think the first issue was about twenty pages and then it got bigger and bigger.

**C.A.:** Well, congratulations on *Blueline*. You were included in Kate Winter's *The Woman and the Mountain*, which I think is a wonderful anthology. You were included with women such as Jeanne Robert Foster, Anne LaBastille, Martha Reben, etc. The other day I asked Neal Burdick whether he could appreciate main stylistic differences between women and male writers of the Adirondacks, and he answered that he didn't see much of a gender difference in terms of style. Being included in this anthology, do you feel that you're part of a female tradition within the Adirondack literature?

**A.G.:** No, not really. I don't see a lot of difference, although I was and still am a great admirer of Jeanne Robert Foster's writing. Her writings remind me more of Browning in some of his dramatic monologues of the nineteenth century. There's a tradition in the way she does her character portraits. But I must say I haven't really kept up with Adirondack writing, so there may be a difference, but I didn't feel that I was in any sort of a tradition. I was not really aware of Reben and Crapsey –I have been since. And Anne LaBastille and I were writing at the same time. Her first book came out at about the same time that *Kinkajou* did; we were contemporaries in that sense.

**C.A.:** Did Kate Winter get in touch with you to tell you about the anthology?

**A.G.:** Yes.

**C.A.:** She claims that for the most part the women included in the anthology are strongly influenced by Thoreau and that living with nature resulted in a new form of spirituality blossoming in their writing and in their approach to life. Do you identify with that?

**A.G.:** I was amazed at what Kate Winter wrote about me. She didn't show me that; I saw it when it came out. But yes, I was really quite influenced by Thoreau. I first read *Walden* when I was a freshman in college. I had a professor who was new that same year, Philip Booth, a poet, and he really knew how to teach Thoreau. It was a wonderful, exciting experience. I've actually taught *Walden* myself, which is one way to really get to know what's going on. Thoreau was a transcendentalist, but I like the way he was rooted in the concrete, material world. Emerson was a little bit abstract for me –I mean this is a matter of taste. I liked the tactual, visual sense that you got from reading *Walden.* Yes, Thoreau was a very strong influence.

**C.A.:** What about in terms of this spirituality that Winter mentions? Did living with nature result in any form of mysticism or pantheism for you?

**A.G.:** Well, you know, I come from a Christian tradition. I have a lot of reservations about Christianity, especially about the ways it's been institutionalized and what atrocities have been done in the name of it. It's not exactly how I was brought up because I was not part of a church-going family, but it's an easy thing to be. I don't think I had an alternative kind of spirituality. Something that has attracted me lately is Taoism, maybe because I like the poetic terminology; it's just full of it. Of course it's translated into English. But the names of some of the exercises, like "wild bird flying" and all that sort of thing… I really like it and the exercises themselves. But no, I don't exactly know what Kate was getting at, to tell you the truth, as far as I am concerned anyway.

**C.A.:** You write a lot about animals and I personally found it a very refreshing way of depicting them. The way you characterize them does not sentimentalize them, but the reader can still grasp each of the animals' personalities. Did you think to yourself how you wanted to represent each of the animals stylistically or did it come in a more natural manner?

**A.G.:** I'll have to give credit to my mother because so much of this book was taken right from her letters. She's the one that set the tone. She was sentimental, but she kept it hidden. She could be pretty hardheaded, because if you're around animals there are many things that you just have to do –things that are disagreeable and things that are painful. So she could be hard-headed, but she loved animals and got great joy out of them, and she thought they were very funny. You know, there was a lot of humor in their interactions. My grandmother was the same way. The one thing I was careful about with this book was to try to sustain the tone and not go off into family history and bad things that happened. Like any family, there are pluses and minuses. I just wanted to keep it on an even keel and not get too distracted. So yes, I was aware of it as I started to write it from the beginning.

**C.A.:** You mentioned in one of your non-fiction pieces that the pathetic fallacy was dangerous because the writer might fall prey to over-sentimentalizing animals. Rather than representing the animal, the writer makes an extension of the self through the pathetic fallacy. How do you balance the limits of animal portrayal?

**A.G.:** It's hard because you instinctively want to make your feelings the animal's feelings. Especially with a dog; for example, a dog is always reacting to you while other animals could care less. So I think it's really hard; you do have to be careful because animals live by their own rules and they're not moral rules. Morality is a human characteristic. Animals have instinct, and they have other ways that guide their behavior, but not a right or wrong or moral sense that we have (sometimes we don't, but we're suppose to have, anyway).

**C.A.:** Have you continued writing on animals or on animal aesthetic representation?

**A.G.:** I don't write articles anymore; I write poetry now.

**C.A.:** Just poetry.

**A.G.:** Yes. I've decided that's what I want to concentrate on. Yes, and I still write about animals; there are animals all through everything I write. Animals give me great pleasure, so that's why I love to write about them.

**C.A.:** In 1979 you founded *Blueline* and were the main editor of the magazine. You're not involved as an editor in the magazine anymore?

**A.G.:** No, Potsdam College is publishing it now –I turned it over to them. It was about 1989, and I was swamped with poems that people were sending. We had a very dedicated little editorial staff, but we all were burdened. And it was hard to get what we truly considered true Adirondack writing. We got nature writing, but we didn't get a lot of writing that seemed typically Adirondack.

**C.A.:** How would you characterize Adirondack writing?

**A.G.:** Well, it was hard because we were always looking for it. There's one writer in the Adirondacks who I think has never been truly recognized and that's Mason Smith. He grew up there, and he wrote a book that came out through a New York publisher a long time ago. He taught at Berkley, I believe, or one of the California colleges. He finally did do a second book, and he rewrote it and rewrote it a million times. I don't know if it's successful or not –I read it and I think it was good in many ways, but it needed some work. Anyway, it truly was an Adirondack book because his characters were people you meet in the towns, the bars. He had the language and he had all the subtleties of the behavior of these people. And he knew the land –he's a boat-builder, too. Roger Mitchell is another good writer; his poems focused on Adirondack history, and we published some of them. He lives in Saranac Lake, I believe. The poems we received were Adirondack enough, but the stories were a challenge. But as time went on there were more and more pieces that focused on the region. I think its poets and writers are beginning to come into their own. There's a lot of good Adirondack writing now.

You should know about this Adirondack writer that I am working on now. His name is Arpad Geyza Gerster; he was a physician who had a camp on Raquette Lake in the Adirondacks in the 1890s. He came over from Hungary and he was a surgeon at Mount Sinai in New York City. He would come up to the Adirondacks to hunt and to fish, and he would bring his family. He wrote four years of diaries that he kept when he spent his summers in the Adirondacks. I edited the first volume and now I'm working on the second volume. He was an artist; he spoke five languages, and his observations of nature are really very interesting because he looks at it as a scientist, but he doesn't describe it in scientific terms. He's pure joy to read; he has a great sense of humor and a wonderful perspective. He also made sketches of what he saw. He kept these journals in 1895, 1896, 1897, and 1898. The Adirondack Museum has the original transcripts, and this is the first time they have been published. To me, that's real Adirondack writing, if anything is.

**C.A.:** How did the museum come across the diaries?

**A.G.:** Gerster's son and grandson became physicians as well. There are generations of both physicians and artists in the family –they're a musical family too; they could do everything. And one of them, Arpad Gerster's grandson, offered these diaries and the sketches to the museum around 1980.

The Adirondack Museum library kept the diaries, but few had access to them. That's why it's so important to publish these things. Sidney Whelan, who is the main editor, was on the board of the Adirondack Museum, and it was his task to go collect the diaries physically from Gerster's grandson, Dr. John W. Gerster, and bring them to the museum. That was the beginning of Sidney's endeavor. He has spent many years transcribing the diaries so research scholars and other people can read them. We were able to bring out the first volume, years 1895 and 1896, in 2005. Now we're working on the second volume due later this year (2010). I work from Sid's typescripts and with the designer on layout, etc. There were other writings by Arpad Gerster, but these were specifically on the Adirondacks, and they were written during the Durant period, so there is plenty of history.

**C.A.:** Your husband, Craig Gilborn, wrote a book on the Durant family. How did he get involved in it?

**A.G.:** He was doing a book on Adirondack camps, which he subsequently published. He was doing research, and he got into the collections at the library. He came across a lawsuit that Ella Durant had filed against her brother, William West Durant, which brought him down financially. Craig read the transcript there at the library and he was fascinated by it, so he wrote the book.

**C.A.:** I've noticed there are a lot of books on Adirondack profiling, Adirondack faces and on what makes the quintessential Adirondacker. Is that something that has been growing in the last years?

**A.G.:** Yes. The Adirondack Museum was the first to do something like that. We hired a photographer, Mathias Oppersdorff, and he went out and interviewed people. He interviewed loggers and various people around the Adirondack Park. He had a recorder, and my job was to boil the transcripts down to two paragraphs. I took a lot of poetic license and Oppersdorff was good; he could extract the essence of what these people were talking about, and so for each portrait there was a little bit of text. The result was *Adirondack Faces*, published in 1991. There have been others like that.

**C.A.:** From your experience as a writer and an editor, do you notice there are certain recurrent myths or archetypes stemming from the "forever wild" clause in literature?

**A.G.:** Yes, you mentioned the "forever wild" clause being exploited to a certain degree in your emails. It's very romantic, that phrase.

**C.A.:** I asked Neal Burdick a similar thing. I had been under the impression that the clause was kind of vague.

**A.G.:** Oh, it was very specific and it was written for a specific reason. Article VII, Section 7 of the New York State Constitution approved in 1894 "guarantees that the lands of the Forest Preserve" would "be forever kept as wild forest lands." It was written to keep the loggers off of the state lands because there was a lot of logging going on that was illegal and too much clear-cutting. So it was written to control the logging operations in the Forest Preserve; "wild" being "unlogged." It was to let the forest stand as it was. It didn't mean going back to virgin forest because there wasn't any virgin forest in the Adirondacks. The forest had been logged over two or three

times, it had been burned over, and there were human footprints all over the Adirondacks. So it was not a real wilderness by any means; it never was –except in prehistoric times, of course, but for a long time it hadn't been. But I think people have exploited the phrase *[Alice shows me a postcard with a slogan that reads "Get Wild"]*; it's in every title. Phil Terrie wanted something like that for his book. I was the editor for his book and I said, "You have to come up with a new title."

**C.A.:** For *Contested Terrain*?

**A.G.:** Yes. He didn't like the title I suggested at first but then he decided it was O.K. I do think "forever wild" has gotten to be a bit of a cliché.

**C.A.:** Driving down here we actually saw a couple of business advertisements saying "forever affordable" and things like that. It's a very romanticizing phrase, but it's good that you clarified it for me. I don't know why I was under the impression of it being vague.

**A.G.:** Well, you were thinking of it the way people think of it now. But at the time it was an act of legislation, it was a very specific thing. There's another museum in the Adirondacks called The Wild Center; I haven't seen it yet. Again, it's using the same phrase.

**C.A.:** Being an editor for *Blueline* for ten years, did you maybe notice a general concern that the writers shared? Was there a time when you noticed a shift in these concerns – maybe towards environmental matters about which they wanted to be particularly articulate?

**A.G.:** I think that shift really came after I was editor. There's been a growing environmental concern in the last twenty years. Bill McKibben was on the forefront before Al Gore warning about global warming. He lived in the Adirondacks for a while and he'd go around and talk to people everywhere about this problem. He's over here in Middlebury now. Yes, I do think there's a growing awareness, but it's been very slow. The writing I saw in *Blueline* was broadly nature writing but didn't have any kind of agenda or concern at that time.

**C.A.:** Do you call yourself an Adirondack writer?

**A.G.:** I suppose I'm an Adirondack writer because I did most of my writing when I was there. I think living in the Adirondacks saturated me; I wasn't just a visitor. I like to think that I'm a writer on a broader sense; I believe that the fairly common things people write about can also be universal themes. So I guess I'm an Adirondack writer – living in Vermont.

**C.A.:** How come you decided to move to Vermont?

**A.G.:** We came because we were so isolated. We lived in Blue Mountain Lake, so we were always in the central Adirondacks. I mean it's wonderful in the summer and in the fall –six or even seven months out of the year. But there were those long winters, and you know, we were there full time; we didn't go to Florida or anything. Even Anne LaBastille got out. It's hard there in the winter, physically and spiritually hard to cope

with. I like to ski and I would ski, but that wasn't my prime enjoyment. So we thought it would be a little more civilized in Vermont, and we find it so. It's very nice; there's a nice sense of community here.

**C.A.:** Are you currently working on a volume of poetry?

**A.G.:** [Gives me a copy of *A North Country Quartet*] This was published by Potsdam College in 2006. There are four or five poems of mine, including one about my mother, that you may find interesting. I'm working on some poems now. I've sent some sonnets that I did to *Blueline*; I thought I'd like to get back to formal poetry as a discipline. I've been writing some and there's a group of us that meets every two weeks. So I'm getting ready to send some poems out now to magazines. I think I've got enough decent ones now. I want to have at least fifteen that I think are worthy.

**C.A.:** About how long does it take for you to write a poem?

**A.G.:** Well, I wrote one the other day in about half an hour and I didn't really change it. But sometimes it takes me days. It depends on what I'm trying to say –sometimes I don't know what I'm trying to say until I write it, and then I see relationships. Sometimes I'm lucky and sometimes I'm not.

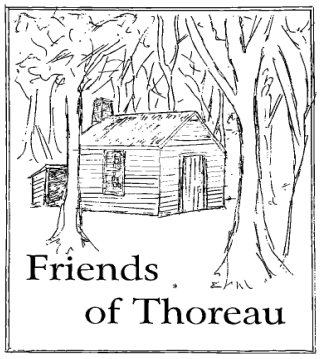
**C.A.:** Could you perhaps read us one of the poems?

**A.G.:** I'll read you a new one. It's called "Snow Script":

Early March and cold
but the long light of
afternoon means spring
is near. Still, I am reluctant
to close the book on winter,
on the notes scrawled across
its white pages.
There in the morning
when I make my narrow
way through the woods
I see the hieroglyphics
of birds and the tiny tread
of a vole documenting
its long journey between
holes. Rabbits and squirrels
leave soft tripods;
wild turkeys imprint
a jargon of arrows.
When I am first
to break the snow, deer
will sometimes follow,
punctuating my broad
tracks with pointed hoofs.

Once on a ski slope
while I dangled overhead
on the lift, I spotted
the trail of a fox,
its catlike prints
a precise lines of cloverleafs
in the snow, and a few
yards later the lovely, looping
signatures of many foxes
that had convened at some
moonlight rendezvous.
I rarely see this nighttime
traffic, the busyness
of woodland animals
going about survival –who,
unlike me, are innocent
of the text they write.

Sometimes
when I try to walk
the path the deer and I
have made, I can't; melted
snow has frozen into potholes
and I stumble forward,
sliding off the track
or sinking deep,
revising the story,
conscious of my own
erratic trail, trying
to tell it straight.




# Adirondack Writing and the Wilderness Aesthetic

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## SCHOLARS' DEBATE

### 1.- A Comparative Analysis of Anthropocentricism: The Iroquois Creation Myth, the Genesis, and the Sublime

Although there are no written records on the Adirondacks predating European contact, from the seventeenth century onwards several scholars took on the task of transcribing Native American stories, beliefs, and prayers. The Iroquois Six Nations provided a diverse and interesting site for anthropological research, and Gabriel Sagard was only the first of many to attempt to write down the tribal group's myth of creation in 1623. Two centuries later, David Cusick published *Sketches of the Ancient History of the Six Nations* in 1828. Cusick was of the Tuscarora peoples, a tribe originally of the North Carolina region that migrated north throughout the eighteenth century and subsequently became an Iroquois ally. Although profound differences between Cusick's recordings and previous versions of the Iroquois creation myth are often palpable, *Sketches* remains one of the most reliable sources of Iroquois culture.

According to Cusick, Iroquois tradition holds that there were once two worlds: the lower dark world, and the upper world of mankind. Accidentally, a pregnant woman

sinks into the lower world while in her sleep, and there she gives birth to twins: Enigorio, the good mind, and Enigonhahetgea, the bad mind. As the children grew, events unfolded as follows:

> The good mind was not contented to remain in a dark situation, and he was anxious to create a great light in the dark world; but the bad mind was desirous that the world should remain in a natural state. The good mind determines to prosecute his designs, and therefore commences the work of creation. At first he took the parent's head, (the deceased) of which he created an orb, and established it in the centre of the firmament, and it became of a very superior nature to bestow light to the new world, (now the sun) and again he took the remnant of the body and formed another orb, and established which was inferior to the light (now the moon). In the orb a cloud of legs appeared to prove it was the body of the good mind, (parent). The former was to give light to the day and the latter to the night; and he also created numerous spots of light, (now stars): these were to regulate the days, nights, seasons, years, etc. Whenever the light extended to the dark world the monsters were displeased and immediately concealed themselves in deep places, lest they should be discovered by some human beings. The good mind continued the works of creation, and he formed numerous creeks and rivers on the Great Island, and then created numerous species of animals of the smallest and the greatest, to inhabit the forests, and fishes of all kinds to inhabit the waters. When he had made the universe he was in doubt respecting some being to possess the Great Island; and he formed two images of the dust of the ground in his own likeness, male and female, and by his breathing into their nostrils he gave them the living souls, and named them Ea-gwe-howe, i.e., a real people; and he gave the Great Island all the animals of game for maintenance and he appointed thunder to water the earth by frequent rains, agreeable of the nature of the system; after this the Island became fruitful and vegetation afforded the animals subsistence. The bad mind, while his brother was making the universe, went throughout the island and made numerous high mountains and falls of water, and great steeps . . . (22)

1.1.- Compare this excerpt of the Iroquois creation story with the extract from the Genesis presented in item 4.1. of the Main Page. In both cases a superior entity creates man to his likeness, but how is the relationship between man and the environment different? For what purpose are natural creatures created and what is their relationship to men? Is harmony between men and nature based on a cyclical balance or understood in hierarchical terms? How do preconceived notions about Native American cultures affect a western reader's interpretation of the text?

1.2.- Notice also that it is the bad mind which creates impressive mountains and waterfalls. In item 4.3. we referred to Edmund Burke's classification of landscape according to the ideals of the sublime and the beautiful. Following Burke's theory, mountains and waterfalls would fall into the category of the sublime, where a mixture of terror and awe exalted the beholder. Interestingly enough, it is the more aggressive evil mind–the entity responsible for the creation of terror and other threats to man–which creates the "sublime" scenes. Considering the fact that the Iroquois myth precedes the dichotomy between the sublime and the beautiful, how do you account for the unique parallelisms between European and Iroquois conceptions of mountains and waterfalls? Do you believe that man is innately predisposed when considering the aesthetics of a landscape, or that his perception is the result of cultural constructs?

## 2.- The Politics of Wilderness in Painting: From Landscape Views to Winslow Homer

Throughout items 4.2. and 4.3. I have briefly discussed the importance of landscape painting in the articulation of an American identity through the work of William James Stillman and the illustrations included in Headley's *The Adirondac.* Indeed, the search for the picturesque became the personal quest for many artists struggling to visually combine Kenneth Burke's ideals of the sublime and the beautiful with the one unique feature that the United States could proudly boast of: its wilderness.

Stillman's *Philosophers' Camp* constitutes a referent of transcendentalist mentality where, as we have seen, the artist portrays different groups in the canvas: the scientists on the left; Emerson, standing alone in the middle; and the marksmen and sportsmen to the right. The three groups symbolize three of the interests in transcendentalist philosophy: the naturalists recall that the close study of nature, which is imperfectly mirroring essences, can nonetheless aid man in the understanding of the Soul. The marksmen allude to the "necessity to kill" that Stillman praised and to the idea of nature as a setting to test one's self-reliance. Thirdly, Emerson, in his "solitude" in the middle of the painting, maintains the aura of the philosopher, the kind of man meant to decipher the actual meaning of progress.

Also belonging to a romantic aesthetic, the illustrations included in *The Adirondac* are meant to complement Headley's observations on the sublime and the beautiful aspects of the Adirondack wilderness. In this case, the engravings, which are not dismissive of a transcendentalist influence, offer a vast view of the landscape, where the artist grasps the same panoramic view that Headley, the beholder, describes. Ingham captures the beauty of the mirroring waters of the heavens at the foot of sky-reaching mountains in *Lake Sanford* and the asymmetrical and pointed verticality of precipices in *Adirondack Pass.* Gignoux and Hill add to the landscape the human presence, in the form of a small tent camp at the edge of the lakeshore and in the form of insignificant paddlers in the all-encompassing wilderness, respectively. Man's presence is small, both in terms of its proportion to the wider panorama and in terms of its effects over that landscape. All in all, it is a presence that is harmonious with nature, a contribution to the preoccupation with the picturesque.

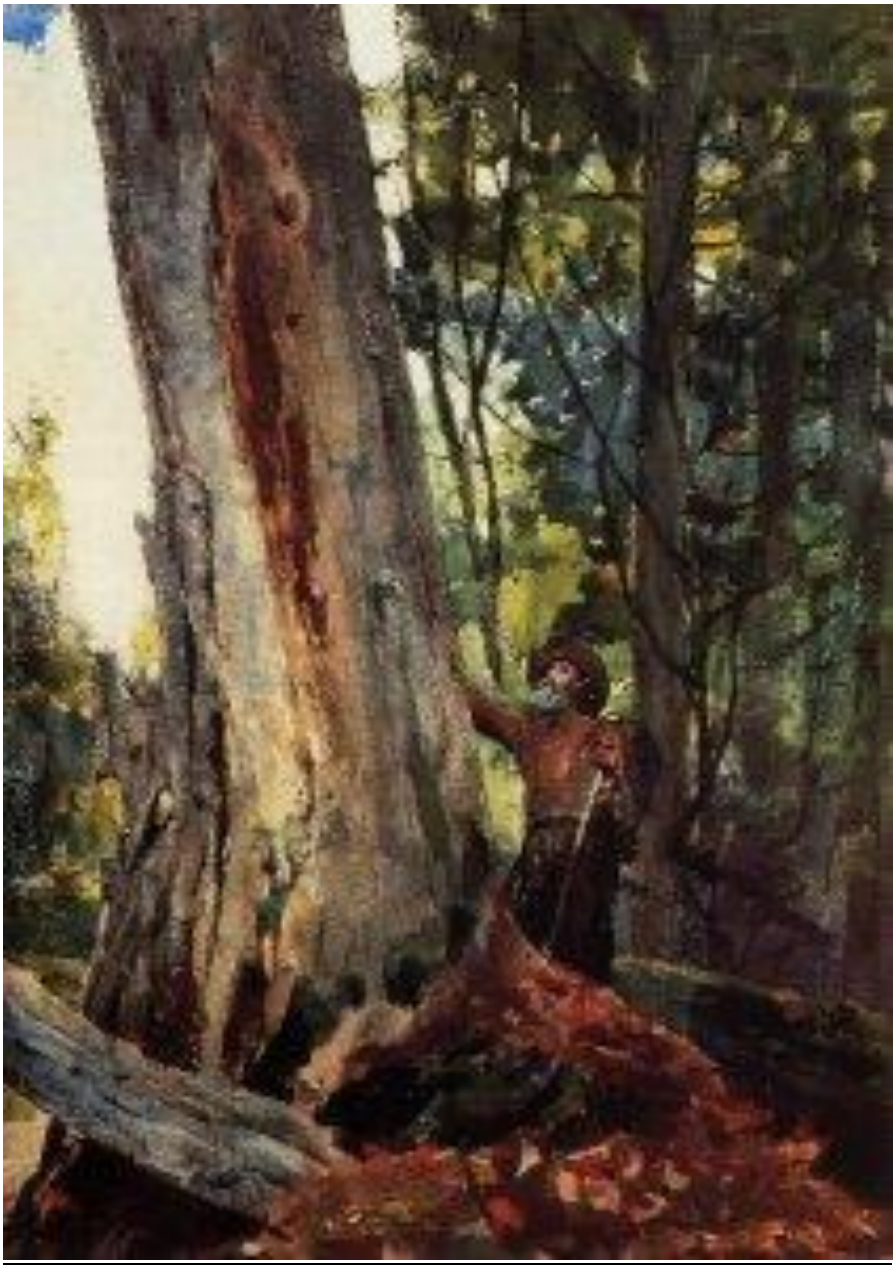
It was the promising Bostonian artist Winslow Homer (1836-1910) who explored a new aesthetic comprehension of the Adirondacks in the disciplines of painting and drawing. Homer first travelled to the Adirondacks in 1870, and from thereon would regularly return, usually to Minerva, in Essex County, to do more paintings until the year of his death. He had worked as an illustrator for *Harper's Weekly* and *Ballou's Pictorial* and had been sent to the front to draw battle scenes of the Civil War. He had travelled to Paris and made impressionist influences his own, and during the first years of his visits to the New York North Country he was also immersed in the painting of scenes of American life ranging from the New England seascapes to representations of African American culture. In spite of his encompassing interest in terms of subject matters, Homer's contribution to Adirondack painting is crucial to understand the complicated social and aesthetic shifts taking place in the region in the 1870s and 1880s. According to David Tatham, "his long association with the Adirondacks spanned both the years of growing public awareness of this scenic wilderness and the years soon following when the arrival of massive logging operations threatened great expanses of the land" (xiii).

The painter and art critic James Fosburgh described Homer's Adirondack watercolors and drawings as follows:

> To the best of my knowledge, [Homer] never painted a "panoramic" landscape, and when he did paint views, they were specific and endowed with a special mood and meaning peculiarly their own. He painted details of the Adirondacks and peopled his pictures with figures that emphasize the special relationship of man to nature that moved him and motivated his work . . . The dominant mood in the Adirondack pictures is one of quiet, stillness, remoteness and solitude. He seems to have been preoccupied with the loneliness of the human spirit, particularly in natural surroundings, and this gives even his more realistic paintings a larger meaning. (418-419)

Consider the following reproduction of two of Homer's Adirondack paintings and answer the questions:

*The Adirondack Guide (1894). Watercolor over graphite on cream wove paper.*
*Courtesy of The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Scala Group, Art Resource or Bridgeman Art Library,*
*Credit to "Mark Harden" "Scan by <A HREF="http://www.artchive.com" >Mark Harden</A>".*



*"Old Friends" (1894). Watercolor over graphite on off-white wove paper. Courtesy of the Worcester Art Museum; museum purchase.*

2.1.- How would you characterize the kind of wilderness that is being represented in these paintings? What are the implications behind the fact that Homer, as Fosburgh points out, prefers to focus on detail than on panoramic views? Considering the fact that Homer was also a man of the romantic age just like Stillman, Durand, Gignoux, and Ingham (and of course, the most excelling American landscape painter, Thomas Cole), what ideological digression from these other painters does Homer reveal through these works? Do you agree with Fosburgh that Homer's Adirondack paintings attest to the loneliness of man's spirit? How is this solitude different from transcendentalists' appreciation of solitary meditation in nature (reflected also in *Philosophers' Camp*)? How is man's "relationship to nature" represented in the paintings?

2.2.- Keep in mind that tourism really started flourishing in the 1870s and the 1880s thanks to the publication of Murray's book and the construction of the railroad , and that during the 1880s and 1890s bureaucracy surrounding the creation of the Adirondack Forest Preserve and Park was revolutionizing state land management through conservationist and preservationist measures. Considering the years in which Homer started visiting the Adirondacks and the years in which these two pieces were completed, how would you connect the theme of these paintings to the socio-political context taking place in the Adirondacks? How is the theme of sportsmanship represented? Do you consider that Homer's representation of the Adirondack guide is faithful to the guide archetype that was being created in literature? What ideological connotations does the name *Old Friends* provide? (See Links to Online Sources to view more of Winslow Homer's Adirondack pieces.)

## 3.- Religion and the Prospects of a Utopia: Joel T. Headley vs. Reverend John Todd

In item 4.3. we analyzed the romanticist style of the former clergyman Joel T. Headley's writing. Notions such as the aesthetic categorization of the landscape through the identification of sublime and beautiful traits, and the mystification of the Adirondack guide and Adirondack sports reflect the wider, national quest for an American identity.

In 1845, Reverend John Todd (1800-1873), a pastor of the First Congregational Church in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, published *Long Lake*, a travel book in which he related several of his visits to the Adirondacks beginning in 1841. Todd recounts the tribulations of farmers and settlers of the region. Death of a family member, hostile weather, and alcohol abuse were just some of the hardships that many of the settlers encountered. But Todd had faith in the people, and in 1842 he organized "The First Congregational Church on Long Lake" with the confidence that the assemblage of a religious community would heal and aid the settlers' spirits, and that the wilderness against which they had long competed would be overcome once and for all. The following excerpts from *Long Lake* consolidate this last idea:

> (1) As soon as the road is open, population will roll in, and I may yet live to see the day when a church shall be erected on one of their beautiful islands and a hundred little boats lie moored around while they keep holy time. What a day that will be! and how sweet will be the notes of the church-going bell as they float up and down and across these beautiful waters and are echoed from the mountains which stand around and glass themselves in the lake! This little church is to be at the head of a great population! (53-54)
>
> (2) When the day shall arrive in which these forests shall be cut down, and along the lakes and valleys and around the base of these glorious mountains there shall be a virtuous, industrious and Christian population, I have no doubt it will easily support a million people. (54)
>
> (3) The scenery of these lakes is grand and beautiful beyond anything of which I ever conceived. The lakes of Scotland have been celebrated of old in story and in song; but the time will come, I doubt not, when these lakes will become the most interesting resort to be found in this country, for the great, the rich, the curious and the fashionable. (54)

> (4) It is difficult to say what the climate will be after the forests are removed. Most suppose it will be colder than at present, inasmuch as the forests break and shut off the winds. If my own opinion is of any value, I think it will be milder after the removal of the trees. (55)

As a response to Todd's speculations and his prospects for the Adirondacks, Headley replied in the New York *Observer* that the religious, farming utopia which Todd had envisioned could in no way sustain itself in the Adirondacks: "This could never be a good farming country . . . this might be a good wool-growing region, or dairy country, but nothing more" (57), he stated. Headley was adhering to the reality of the soils which added to the "awfully rough, cold, and forbidding country to the farmer" (58). Contrary to Todd's imaginative outlook, religion was neither a fact nor a prospect for the settlers, according to Headley:

> The truth is, the people here, as a general thing, would not give a farthing for any religious privileges, indeed would rather be without them; and instead of this colony being a center from which shall radiate an immense population, covering the whole of this wild region, it will drag on a miserable existence, composed, two-thirds of it, by those who had rather hunt than work. (58)

Consider the quotes from Todd and Headley above and answer the following questions in the form of a short essay:

3.1.- Which of the two was correct in their predictions of a sustainable farming community? Did farming ever truly flourish in the Adirondacks? What other relevant figures of Adirondack history envisioned a farming community and how did this ideal contradict other utopian prospects for the land? How does this difference of opinion relate to Thomas Jefferson's plan of a national economic self-sufficiency through farming? Does religion assist Jefferson's argument or does it in any way erode it for the purpose of personal salvation (in other words, does religion entail an equal, a parallel, an opposite, or a tangent angle to Jefferson's ideal)?

3.2.- Consider excerpt (1) from *Long Lake* and item 4.1. of the Main Page, in which we recalled protestant and catholic conceptions of the wilderness. What kind of wilderness is being portrayed by Todd? What does the church, as a physical and as a spiritual institution in the middle of a wild country represent for Todd? From what we have read about Headley in this item and in item 4.3. of the Main Page, what would you say would be his take on this matter? Consider also excerpt (4): do religious prospects entail any form of environmentalist methods? Does the domestication of the land (for example, farming or the creation of a garden) in any way lead to conservationist and/or preservationist practices? How does this relate to the concept of utopia?

3.3.- Compare excerpt (3) to Headley's sense of nationalism and to his classification of landscape according to the sublime and the beautiful, as explained in item 4.3. of the Main Page. Answer as well the following matters: Can beauty and sublimity of nature be conceived as a religious end (rather than as an aesthetic end)? How does the category of beauty relate to the emergence of the great camps and the conception of the Adirondacks as a rich man's playground, which Todd, to some extent, predicted?

**4.- Understanding Cooper's Conception of "Progress": Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, the Indian Removal Act, and the Effects on the Wilderness.**

In item 4.4. of the Main Page, we have briefly considered Fenimore Cooper's vision and version of "progress." The violence in which the nation had been forged had been the product of clashing cultures: the French, the English, and the Indians. It had been a tragic period, yet an indispensable one not only for the formation of the American character, but also because it didactically showed the incompatibility between these cultures. Uncas's death is as necessary as Magua's: in the end, benevolence or fiendishness of spirit in an Indian is irrelevant, for both kinds are destined to disappear. Indians were, after all, regarded as part of the wilderness, and wilderness was to be subdued, as much as it afflicted someone like Natty Bumppo. It was Roderick Nash who first pointed out this contradiction, for although "Cooper took great pains to show that wilderness had a value as a moral influence" (76), he "knew that civilization also had its claims and that ultimately they must prevail" (77).
Romantic as he was, certainly Cooper was a white man of his time when it came to the topic of land management and Indian removal policies. When *The Last of the Mohicans* was published, the Jeffersonian agrarian utopia was still in great part the ideal for which politicians and civilians were striving. Farming in America was conceived as a morally just practice because the laborer was to produce according to his amount of voluntary work, his physical sacrifice, without the mediation of the European feudal system. As Jefferson writes in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (first published in English in 1787), "we have an immensity of land courting the industry of the husbandmen . . . Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God" (197). Echoing Calvinistic suppositions of predestination, Jefferson endorsed the national activity of domesticating and harvesting the land, advocating agrarianism as the purest form of the democratic spirit, carried out by an American version of the "yeoman," which in England was a type of farmer who worked his own land under his own rules. In this way, "[to Jefferson], agriculture was not primarily a source of wealth, but of human virtues and traits most congenial to popular self-government" (Griswold, 667). Under this providence of Christianity and of patriotism, the backwoods culture was born, and pioneering families cleared the lands in which they settled, disrupting the traditional lifestyle of Indian tribes. With Jefferson's Ordinance of 1785, America's wilderness legally became a geography of real estate. By the early 1800s, the solution to ridding the land out of its most troublesome nuisance, the Indians, would be to move them to the Louisiana Territory. They would be allowed to stay east of the Mississippi as long as they assimilated the ways of white men.

Thus, although critics often point out that through a historical romance on the loss of the Indian race, Cooper was anticipating–and justifying–the genocide politics of the Andrew Jackson in the 1830s, by 1826 brutal practices regarding Indian affairs were already taking place. Before Jackson became the seventh president of the United States in 1828, he had made a living through slave trading and land speculation. Jackson was undoubtedly influenced by Jefferson's agrarian reformations and his writings on manufacture and was determined to maintain such practices at the expense of Indian populations. Sometimes Jackson opted for the battlefield, and other times he assaulted traditional Indian life from within through briberies, extortions, etc. This double strategy led to the extermination of thousands of Indians and their traditional ways of life. The late historian Howard Zinn credits Jackson on initiating an attack on Indian culture from within:

> Jackson's 1814 treaty with the Creeks started something new and important. It granted Indians individual ownership of land, thus splitting Indian from Indian, breaking up communal landholding, bribing some with land, leaving others out –introducing the competition and conniving that marked the spirit of Western capitalism. It fitted well the old Jeffersonian idea of how to handle the Indians, by bringing them into "civilization." (127)

A few years later, his violent extortion of Indians had resulted in the Seminole War of 1818, and when he became president, he proposed the Indian Removal Act to gain the support of Congress for the relocation of more than seventy thousand Native Americans to the west of the Mississippi River.

Cooper's conception of progress was one that was morally attached to the Jeffersonian agrarian ideal and, though not without a sense of guilt, he deemed the removal of Indians as the necessary legislative practice. When the first books of the Leatherstocking Tales were published, Jackson had already been proclaimed a national hero for his participation in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend (1814), where eight hundred Creeks had perished. It is in this context that *The Last of the Mohicans* should be interpreted so as not to succumb to the romanticized, eulogizing tone of the final scene of the novel, when Uncas is buried. Keeping the contextual relationship between Jefferson, Cooper, and Jackson in mind, scholars are asked to research the history of Indian removal, genocide, and reservations and answer the following questions in the form of essays:

4.1.- Although the character of Magua was interpreted by readers of popular fiction as being purely evil and demonic, Cooper nevertheless grants him discursive spaces in the novel to justify his actions. In explaining his motives to his prisoner, Cora, Magua retells the story of many Indians and how one of the most powerful of the white man's weapons, alcohol, led to their downfall:

> Magua was born a chief and a warrior among the red Hurons of the lakes; he saw the suns of twenty summers make the snows of twenty winters run off in the streams, before he saw a paleface; and he was happy! Then his Canada fathers came into the woods and taught him to drink the firewater, and he became a rascal . . . When the English and the French fathers dug up the hatchet, Le Renard [Magua] struck the warpost of the Mohawks and went out against his own nation. The palefaces have driven the redskins from their hunting grounds, and now, when they fight, a white man leads the way. The old chief at Horican, your father, was the great captain of our war party. He said to the Mohawks do this, and do that, and he was minded. He made a law, that if an Indian swallowed the firewater and came into the cloth wigwams of his warriors, it should not be forgotten. (121-122)

Magua goes on to relate that he was caught drinking the "firewater" and under the order of Munro was whipped before the other warriors.

Magua's story was certainly not an isolated case in reality, and even throughout the twentieth century alcohol has been a major problem within Native American communities. How and in what sectors has alcohol affected the Indian population of North America? What social measures have been adopted to solve the problem? The Adirondack guide, Mitchell Sabattis, was also prone to alcohol abuse until L.E. Chittenden offered to pay for his mortgage if he promised to stay sober. What are the

implications behind presenting the white man as the cause of the problem and at the same time as one Indian's personal savior?

4.2.- The backwoods culture that developed in accordance to Jefferson's agrarian republic also generated a pioneer lifestyle where whites and Indians came to be friends and aided one another in their respective troubles. The "King of the Wild Frontier," Davy Crockett (1786-1836), for example, has gone down in history as a "lifelong friend of the Indians" (Zinn, 135), among other things. Many settlers engaged in the same farming practices as Indians that made use of the ecological cycles of the land and its nutrients. Write about the differences between "swidden" cultivation, husbandry, and land clearing. In what areas were each of the practices developed? As America advanced towards capitalism and consumer culture, how did it affect these agricultural methods and what were the innovations brought in by George Perkins Marsh in 1864?

4.3.- The Indian Removal Act was directed against the Choctaws, the Chickasaws, the Seminole, and the Cherokee. How did each of the tribes react? Did they find support in leading members of white society and politics? What is the Trail of Tears? How did the policies of Indian relocation affect Native Americans of the Adirondacks and the Six Nations?

**5.- Gerrit Smith, John Brown, and the Abolitionist Movement in the Adirondacks: an Introduction to African American Environmentalist Thought.**

The legendary abolitionist John Brown (1800-1859)–not to be confused with the John Brown of the Brown Tract–was not from the Adirondacks and neither did he reside there for long. His name, however, is significant to Adirondack history, and opens up the chapter of African American culture and abolitionism in the nineteenth-century North Country frontier.

The story begins in 1846 when the New York abolitionist Gerrit Smith (the son of Peter Smith, a successful businessman in a fur trade partnership with John Jacob Astor) decided to distribute his inherited Adirondack lands among African Americans, especially among fugitive slaves. He possessed about one hundred and twenty thousand acres in the vicinity of Lake Placid. These he divided into forty-acre tracts which he gave to an estimate of three thousand blacks to farm and become part of the Jeffersonian agrarian republic (see previous item of this section). In time, the tracts could be worth more than $250 each, therefore endowing black male proprietors with the right to vote in the State of New York. In spite of the idealism, as Amy Godine points out, only one hundred and fifty from the three thousand grantees actually moved with their families to the Adirondacks. Although a few families remained as permanent settlers, most of them deserted the region after some time. "By 1848 the Negroes had abandoned their clearings and settled in hovels in a ragged settlement to share their miseries and their few possessions;" writes William Chapman White, "what was needed was someone who could encourage them, teach them, and be an example of independence for them" (196).

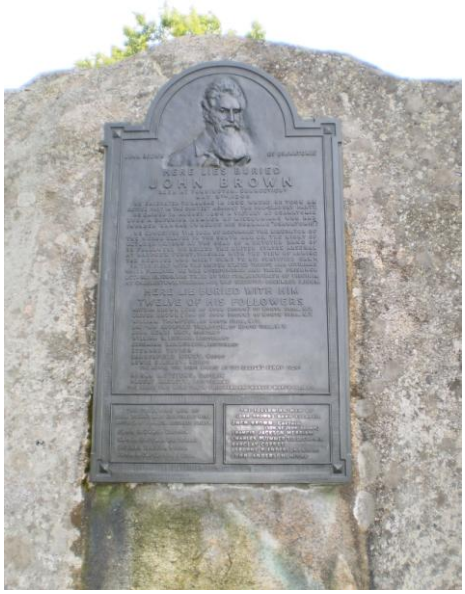
Their mentor, at least for some time, would be John Brown. He purchased a two hundred and forty acre farm from Smith and in 1848 he took his wife and children there. Brown would come and go from the farm, but in spite of his agitated lifestyle as an

abolitionist, “the North Elba farm was the nearest thing to home he ever had” (Peterson, 5). What he encountered when he moved there is described by Paul Schneider:

> The few black families that were already in the area were struggling. The land had not been properly surveyed, so none were sure if they were on the right plots, and title was not yet cleared. In the years after the 1850 fugitive slave law allowing bounty hunters to prowl the free states in search of runways, most of North Elba’s African Americans seemed to prefer to live together rather than out on isolated farms anyway. There was a small community of about ten modest, square log houses with flat roofs along the Elba River. Flying over the settlement, some sources report, was a large red flag with the name “Timbuctoo” written on it. (108)

Brown and his family aided fugitives, and from what writer Richard Henry Dana, Jr. recalls, treated them with the utmost respect (see Dana on Works Cited). Despite this idealism and endeavor, however, the enterprise failed. In 1851 Brown took his family to Ohio, and then back to the Adirondacks in 1855. Until his capture in the Harpers Ferry raid in 1859, Brown stayed only months and weeks at a time with his family. Among his last requests before his execution, however, was his desire to be buried in the North Elba farm. After the hanging in Virginia, his wife took the body to the farm. A few years later, the bodies of two sons, Oliver and Watson, who were respectively killed and mortally wounded, were to rest with their father and their brother Frederick, who had also lost his life to the cause in a raid at Osawatomie. Today the John Brown Farm and the graves stand as a historic memorial site in North Elba.

*Sculpture commemorating John Brown at the John Brown Farm in North Elba, today a national historic site.*


*Gravestone and plate at the John Brown Farm.*

The story of Gerrit Smith and John Brown is part of the basic nineteenth-century Adirondack history. I have summarized it so that readers may acquire some knowledge on how the abolitionist movement affected the northern wilderness; but the topic for discussion which I wish to raise is more centered on the type of community that African Americans unsuccessfully attempted to nurture there and on some key thoughts on African American environmentalism.

Hypotheses as to why the black agrarian community initiated by Gerrit Smith was fruitless have often been based on racist assumptions and on environmental determinism. Amy Godine denounces the fact that "because it was black and founded on a principle, not for speculative profit, historians have blamed its demise on the presumed incompatibility of African-Americans with Adirondack farming" (71). The historically-grounded relationship between black American culture and the agrarian utopia is in fact more complex than the mere simplified notion of "incompatibility" suggests. As Kimberly K. Smith argues in her book *African American Environmental Thought*, ecocentric and ecocritic studies have traditionally neglected the role and position of black Americans in how the environment is interpreted and interacted with. To begin with, all political and economic measures regarding the American territory have either originated inside white supremacist ideologies or have been promoted as a way of life meant to be practiced by white settlers. The Jeffersonian agrarian ideal left no room for the possibility of black farming outside the institution of slavery, and the conservationist and preservationist movements emerged mostly from upper and upper middle-class circles. Many preservationists, including John Muir, often reflected tinges of racism. Because of the oppressive and alienating dynamics of plantation labor in slavery, black environmentalism cannot be structured or deciphered under the terms expressed by the mainstream (white) conservation and environmental movement. The activity of cultivation, deemed by Jefferson as one of creativity, self-realization and moral improvement, is instead one based on biopower and submission. While for white settlers farming implied notions such as "property" and "democracy," for slaves and ex-slaves the corresponding relationship between land and man had been violated through

the mediation of masters and plantation owners. I do not mean to say that African American reflections on the environment should be interpreted as completely opposite to white patriarchal principles, and neither do I intend to imply that black environmentalism should be understood as a mere reaction to such principles. Rather, as Kimberly Smith proposes, it should be deciphered from its historical position within the American dialogue between multiple cultures. The question of how to develop a meaningful relationship between emancipated slaves and the farming lands is mainly one based on possession. Kimberly Smith explains that

> Land may be simply a commodity, something to be owned or traded. This concept seems to reduce the meaning of one's relationship to the land to mere economics, but for black Americans the debate about who can rightfully possess the land extended beyond economics into questions of citizenship, of membership in the political community . . . From the perspective of black Americans, owning land means more than acquiring wealth; it means civic membership, political autonomy and personality, and community integrity. One's relationship to the land is integrally connected to one's relationship to the political community. (9)

Surely this was part of what Gerrit Smith had in mind when he set up the forty-acre system in the hopes that, among other things, black residents could eventually have the right to vote in the State of New York. But if even in the post-bellum years farming was mostly futile for the black community because of continuing forms of oppression and the decline that agricultural economy faced, during the years of the fugitive slave act it was even harder to consolidate farming as the promising labor through which racism could be subverted.

With this in mind, scholars should consider the theories surrounding the failure of Gerrit Smith's utopia of racial equality. Different Adirondack histories will provide different insights, and while some may argue that the climate and the difficult soils were too much for black families to endure, others, such as Paul Schneider and Amy Godine will propose deeper, more complex hypotheses. Scholars should keep in mind the implications of "possessing" the land, and contrast the circumstances and results in the Adirondacks to those that occurred in the post-war South. In addition to this, scholars should approach the selected sources wary of the lens of environmental determinism and racial essentialism so as to deconstruct the texts at hand and effectively trace the evolution toward African American environmental thought in modern ecocriticism.

## 6.- From "Muscular Christianity" to the "Strenuous Life": Roosevelt's Doctrines Meet Conservation

Gerster and Byron-Curtiss were heirs to the "muscular Christianity" which Murray, among others, had propagated. "Better the roaring harmony of Nature than all the artificial clatter of the city" (18) was a maxim that Byron-Curtiss liked to live by, and tramping and fishing were among his favorite activities. Gerster's reflections on the possibilities of nature versus life in the city mirror the growing secularization of this muscular Christianity. His scientific and physiological insights turned from spiritual implications to promote the masculine upbringing of young people, especially boys, with patriotic aims. Noting down one of his many canoe trips, he writes:

> As far as the physical benefit derived is concerned, I don't doubt that it was excellent, training down 8-10 lbs. of flesh without overburdening heart, or nervous system. Alternating paddling & carrying brings to action all the muscles of the body, and is far better physical exercise than the ordinary forms of athletic exercise. Besides, it carries you through fine scenery, giving ample opportunities for observing men & nature, teaches prudence, endurance & self-reliance, and being used in the training of young people, may have a very serious and practical bearing upon the faster development and ultimate success in life of many a boy. Should ever the country be in need of men to take to the field in her defence, boys having had the training of the backwoodsman would be ready made soldiers and formidable antagonists in a war, where successful fighting is based upon the principles illustrated in our early Indian wars and the war of the Rebellion. (36)

Gerster's position precluded Theodore Roosevelt's exaltation of the wilderness as a rite of passage for American men. On April 10, 1899, Roosevelt delivered one of his most famous speeches before the Hamilton Club in Chicago. "The Strenuous Life" synthesized his philosophies on what the American spirit, both at an individual and at a collective level, ought to strive for. From Roosevelt's view, Americans had a responsibility to live up to the freedom that the nation's fathers and settlers had so arduously fought for; they owed it to history to maintain a moral integrity by leading "the strenuous life," especially in such a complex era when industrialism, international warfare and diplomacy, and the emergence of materialism and the middle class threatened to distract citizens from patriotic righteousness. The spreading pursuit for comfort and commodities distorted Americans' sense of obligation towards their country, which was a moral assault both on generations of the past and those of the future, and corrupted the virtues of honest men just as much as those of women. Roosevelt made a clear distinction between the two possible lifestyles citizens were now contemplating:

> I wish to preach, not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife; to preach the highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph. (2005: 1)

The strenuous life, he says, "is the only national life which is really worth leading" (2005: 7-8). While brief mention is given to women's responsibilities to their virtuous roles as "the housewife," "the helpmeet of the homemaker," and "the wise and fearless mother of many healthy children" (4), it is truly the exaltation of masculinity which stands at the top of Roosevelt's priorities:

> No country can long endure if its foundations are not laid deep in the material prosperity which comes from thrift, from business energy and enterprise, from hard, unsparing effort in the fields of industrial activity; but neither was any nation ever yet truly great if it relied upon material prosperity alone. All honor must be paid to the architects of our material prosperity, to the great captains of industry who have built our factories and our railroads, to the strong men who toil for wealth with brain or hand; for great is the depth of the nation to these and their kind. But our debt is yet greater to the men whose highest type is to be found in a statesman like Lincoln, a soldier like Grant. They showed by their lives that they recognized the law of work, the law of strife; but they recognize that there were yet other and even loftier duties –duties to the nation and duties to the race. (2005: 8)

Materialism and industrialism, therefore, were prosperous only to the extent that the men behind it–from the worker or soldier at the bottom of the hierarchy to the highest ranking leaders–maintained their masculine virtues immaculate. Courage, bravery, discipline, dedication, and most importantly, trust in the nation would bring one closer to the great men of the past (Roosevelt echoes Thomas Carlyle's and Emerson's beliefs in the infallibility of the mimetic effects of representative men).

It is clearly visible that the strenuous life doctrine had multiple implications for men's participation in the public sphere. One of these is the often noted link between men's activities in industry and in the military and Roosevelt's belief that wilderness could restore the vigor and strength of men. As we have seen throughout this case study, this conviction was nothing new. Already in the 1830s Washington Irving had been claiming that the European environment of refinement threatened to emasculate young men, while the American wilderness could only bolster their virility. Emerson, Hoffman, and Headley had as well gone to the wilderness retreat with the sole company of other men because the presence of women would erode the significance of hunting, fishing, or even meditating. The women's absence in these excursions was customary (we have also seen the Northwoods Club's restrictions against female members). The threat of becoming effeminate was palpable. Roosevelt himself was an active practitioner of masculine virtues in the wilderness and often visited the Adirondacks. On September 13, 1901, he actually received the news of President McKinley's death in the summit of Mount Marcy while in an excursion with the members of the prestigious Tahawus Club. Throughout his administration he recurrently preached conservation ethics, and even asked John Muir, America's leading preservationist, to accompany him to the Yosemite region. His writings and speeches on the sustainable use and maintenance of natural resources were extensive and repetitive, revealing his premonitions of the environmental apocalypse that the modern era was driving straight for.

6.1.- In item 4.5. of the Main Page we discussed Murray's advocacy of muscular Christianity. In the same way that Murray believed that occasional retreats to the wilderness could restore mind as much as body, so did Roosevelt's strenuous life doctrine claim sportsmanship as an accurate and healthy method to reinforce masculine traits so characteristic of boyhood and the frontier ideal. There remain, however, some differences between the two philosophies. In the excerpts shown above are there signs of a growing secularization in the concept of manhood? If there are, what implications does this have in the role that nature has in the lives of men? We have seen how Murray also gave the impression that the level of effort for sporting was up to the visitor's character and caprices; is this description closer to the strenuous life or to the "doctrine of ignoble ease"? Murray also insisted that "ladies" should visit the Adirondacks as well, for nature could perfectly provide for their delicate needs and limitations typical of their sex. Does the strenuous life afford any new perspectives on the image of women? In order to answer this, scholars should attend not just to the female roles expressed literally by Roosevelt, but to the wider implications that all citizens' compromise with the past and the future holds.

6.2.- In a 1913 essay called "Our Vanishing Wild Life," Roosevelt wrote the following:

> The civilized people of to-day look back with horror at their medieval ancestors who wantonly destroyed great works of art, or sat slothfully by while they were destroyed. We have passed that stage. We regard Attic temples and Roman triumphal arches and

> Gothic cathedrals as of priceless value. But we are, as a whole, still in that low state of civilization where we do not understand that it is also vandalism wantonly to destroy or to permit the destruction of what is beautiful in nature . . . Here in the United States we turn our rivers and streams into sewers and dumping-grounds, we pollute the air, we destroy forests, and exterminate fishes, birds, and mammals. (561-562)

How does this idea relate to the nationalist fervor on the part of artists and writers that we have discussed in item 4.3. of the Main Page and in item 2 of this section?

In the same essay, he goes on to say that "for game the bags should be strictly limited by law, all spring shooting should be stopped, and in most places there should be long close seasons, and, as regards many birds and mammals, absolute prohibition of killing at all" (561). In items 4.6. and 4.8. of the Main Page some insight as to the clash between locals of rural communities and conservationists was given. In what other areas or regions, aside from the Adirondacks, did game-law methods result in violent outbursts or sabotages on the part of locals? Were game-law restrictions applied differently in Indian lands than in areas of white settlers? Conservation ethics were originally a product of upper-class mentality. Is this the situation today? Or, is environmental conservation more aligned with other socio-economic classes? Keep in mind that early upper-class conservationists did believe that they were exercising their democratic rights in regulating wilderness use. How, then, has the notion of democracy toward the wilderness evolved in terms of who has the right to advocate conservation ethics?

## 7.- Other Perspectives on the Adirondacks at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century: The Poetry of Jeanne Robert Foster

In item 4.6. of the Main Page we considered the de-mystified descriptions of Adirondack folks in the writings of Gerster and Byron-Curtiss. Although the latter also made use of local tall tales, realism could be established as the general narrative style of choice. Even if the tall tales of Atwell Martin were clearly exaggerations and products of the hermit's imagination, the fact that Byron-Curtiss chooses to record them realistically answers very vividly to the manner in which news and stories travelled orally throughout the region.

Realism is also the approach undertaken by Jeanne Robert Foster (1879-1970) in her portraits and catalogs of Adirondackers. Foster, one of the canonical writers of the Adirondacks, was from a different background to that of Gerster and Byron-Curtiss. If in item 4.6. I made it a point that the class difference between Gerster and Byron-Curtiss conditioned how they mingled with locals and how they reacted to game laws and state wardens, Foster's upbringing in poverty also determines how she depicts the raw harshness of the lumbering camps, farmers, and rural communities of which she wrote. Her attention to detail in characters' speech and clothing, and in their struggle to endure the hardships of the long winters and the rough labors in the wilderness are used to reveal the humanity of each of these people. Often a certain light in their eyes or fissures in their words unveil a sense of hope and optimism about the future times to come. Foster's sensibility and empathy with these folks is truly genuine; she had lived through the same experiences since she was a child, after all. According to Kate Winter, "the characters are beset by poverty, isolation, madness, religious fervor, misspent love and death" (17). This is not to say that Foster's realism is a tragic one; her poetry, prose

and plays also celebrate the harmonious relationship between Adirondackers and the wilderness, and endearing memories of the good, fun times also pepper her work. If there is any absolute tragedy in her work, it is her lamentations of how the mask of time and progress sweeps away a mode of life that was based on the close contact with wilderness and the dynamics of self-reliance. All the characters cataloged in her work would succumb to anonymity, and all that was destined to be remembered by future generations was a homogenous set of people clustered in the frontier-like North Country. But for Foster nothing about the Adirondack folks was homogenous: every neighbor, every lumberman, every hunter, every farmer's child, every priest, every berry-picker, every old maid was different, and each and every one of her real-life subject matters provided her with a piece of her own identity and a piece of her sense of belonging to the mountains.

Foster was born Julia Elizabeth Oliver in the Adirondack town of Johnsburg. She was the daughter of a lumberjack and a schoolteacher. Her mother, Lucia Newell Oliviere, who would always urge Jeanne to find a more cultivated life beyond the Adirondacks, is also included in Kate Winter's anthology of Adirondack women writers, *The Woman in the Mountain.* In the poverty of the household, Foster often took care of farming chores and learned to rely on neighbors just as they relied on her and her family. She grew intimately acquainted with the hardships of lumber camps. Her father would often be away months at a time at a camp, and her grandfather had drowned on a log drive in the Hudson before she was born. In 1881 the family moved to Minerva, in Essex County, to try out farming. Foster came to appreciate the ways of the wilderness and she learned to decipher the signs of nature. She sometimes guided parties of tourists for twenty-five cents to make ends meet. By the age of fifteen she had followed her mother's footsteps and was working as a school teacher. When she was seventeen she married Matlock Foster, an insurance agent, and despite the twenty-five year difference Matlock would always support his wife in her path to becoming part of the New York and Parisian intellectual elite. The couple left the Adirondacks, and for several years moved between Rochester and New York. It was not long before Foster became aware of the neglected place to which women were confined to in Victorian society: secluded in the private sphere as mothers and nurturers, life for women was very different from what Foster had been accustomed to in the Adirondacks. Noel Riedinger-Johnson notes that

> Jeanne could not accept these attitudes that were so different from the stark realities of the Adirondacks, where women worked side by side with men in their daily struggle with the elements. In her family, Jeanne had been her father's strong "son" as well as her mother's sensitive daughter. Alongside her father she had cared for the livestock, handled the farm chores, helped in the fields, and even skidded logs in the forest . . . For her, there could never be a clearly defined–and plainly subordinate–role for women. Just as necessity had mandated that she roam the mountains, dense forests, and lakes and rivers of the Adirondacks . . . , she chose to go beyond the Victorian constraints imposed on the women of her day. (xxiv)

These convictions regarding her sex undoubtedly guided her in her flourishing career. Foster graduated from the Stanhope-Wheatcroft Dramatic School in New York, she occasionally modelled for photographers (even appearing in the cover of *Vanity Fair*), and when she and Matlock moved to Boston, she studied at Boston University and at Harvard under William James and George Santayana. She also worked as a journalist and editor for *The American Review of Reviews.* It was her eleven-year dedication to the journal which allowed her to travel to Europe, where she mingled with the likes of John

Butler Yeats (with whom she developed a life-lasting friendship), Ford Maddox Ford, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot. But it was especially her intense friendship with the art patron John Quinn through which she became part of the center of the modernist elite. Foster's activities among such prominent intellectuals are deserving of a study on its own, and the reason why they are mentioned here is so that the reader may contrast her work with the avant-gardes of the first decades of the century, with which he or she is probably more familiar.

Foster's poetry collections on the Adirondacks, *Neighbors of Yesterday* and *Wild Apples* were published in 1916. In contrast to the excessive experimentalism characteristic of the avant-gardes, Foster's poetry was more in the line of Robert Frost's preoccupation with landscape. A pending realism would always characterize her style, but as she reached maturation as a writer she would rid herself of the "conventional sentimentality that marks the earlier poems" (Winter, 17). The following excerpts are taken from *Adirondack Portraits* (1986), a posthumous collection of previously unpublished poems, prose selections, and fragments of correspondences compiled by Noel Riedinger-Johnson.

(1) From "Neighbors"

The word "neighbors" don't mean much to most folks,
Not unless you lived back in the North Woods.
And the way things are going there won't be woods
Very long, or wilderness; it'll be
Imitation ranches, and ski runs, and places
Called by names that the folks who lived there
Years and years ago never heard of.
But lovely things vanish; flowers that grew everywhere
Hide for a little while, and where once were meadows
With beaver dams, and streams crossing the roads
That the horses waded through with wagons,
They are going as the feet of destruction
And progress climb the high peaks. (13)

(2) From "Jen Murdock's Roosters"

Nature don't listen to us very much.
When we tell her what to do, she veers off
On some road she had in her mind
Before we were born. Smart men tell us now
That they're digging down into secrets,
But when they've dug out just how she does things
And set it all down, she'll pull out a trick
That's brand new. (15)

(3) From "Mis' Cole"

"I'm just walking away. Haying is done;
They can't say I left when the work was heavy.
Sarah is fourteen and Luddy twelve.
The twins are ten and Georgie is seven.
They can get along. I'm not coming back."
"Why, Mi's Cole," I said, "Don't say that. You know
You've got a man and five healthy children."

"I haven't got a single thing," she replied.
"Not even a hair ribbon, only leather
To tie my hair. I never have a cent.
Children are children; they have their own things.
I'm only hands and feet for George,
Someone to put the food on the table,
Someone to have more children for him,
And mend and hand-sew their dresses on them
Until they wear out in rags. (28)

(4) From "The Game Protector"

"Well, how are things?" I asked when I went in
To see Hank Birch. He's game protector now –
Six feet of lightning if you break the law.
He left his work. "I'm glad you came along.
Sit down awhile if you can find a place
In this old shop. I'm building guide boats now . . .

"I had some luck when I caught George McGinn.
He fed two hounds and kept a-running deer.
But men up here who really rile my blood
Are 'jackers'; they're the meanest hunters yet,
Paddling at night around the water's edge,
And when a deer comes down to drink,
Flashing a jack light straight into their eyes,
And shooting while he's dazzled by the glare . . .

Today someone went past my boat shop here
And tossed a bundle out. I opened it.
There was a haunch of meat, fresh killed I'm sure,
And this scrawl here. I'll read you what it said.
'*Just keep your nose off Minnie Pond for good*
*And you'll have venison every day this spring.*'
I'm going there tonight –and every night
Until I get those jackers. That's my job. (113-114)

(5) From "Shanty Days"

My heart aches –for the lumbering days are gone
Though you may still find cuts in the deep woods,
If you remember where to look for them,
That led to big forgotten lumber jobs.
With long shanties that bunked the men.

It was a clean hard life. Men went in when snow came
And didn't take the hay-road till the spring
There were some farmers too who hired out
With regular lumberjacks when crops had failed
To earn a little cash to help the farm.
It was a great adventure when a boy
Went into the lumber-woods for the first time.
He had to earn his grub, to fight his way
Till the jacks saw he had the stuff it took
To hold his own and keep big bullies in their place. (131)

(6) From “State Land”

> “Father, why did you make the timber lot
> State land? If you must sell, why not to us?” . . .
>
> “I think, my sons, that you in time will see
> My reasons; you are young and moving out
> Upon the tide of what to me is strange.
> You have new ways to struggle and to win,
> More than I had, who cleared land for my farm.
> I have watched spoilers come and take away
> So much I hardly know my township here.
> I gave the mountainside to keep it wild,
> Free for the life that it has had so long.
> The trail will always be what it is now.
> The summit, with its scrubby balsam trees,
> A playground for the deer and the porcupine.
> The timberland –well, I walked over it
> Before I gave the deed to join its soil
> To our wilderness. Beyond my line
> I looked down on the havoc of the years,
> Dude ranches sprawling where farmhouses stood.
> I have no quarrel with what you call ‘our times,’
> But my heart spoke: I must preserve this land.” (142)

Compare these excerpts to the writings of Gerster and Byron-Curtiss. Among other contrasts, consider the following matters: How does each writer react to the modernization of the Adirondacks toward the conservation era? It is Foster who seems to accede more readily and to support the preservation and conservation of the forests as wild lands. Considering that she is the one who was raised in the wilderness environment, and therefore perhaps better comprehended the necessities of residents, is her stance toward the “forever wild” clause paradoxical in any way? The frankness of her tone in her nostalgic lamentations, often bordering on seriousness, distances itself from the humor and celebrative tones of Gerster and Byron-Curtiss. Do you think this separateness of narrative voices could be caused by their different social status? Could gender difference also explain the opposite approaches in terms of content and style? The passage of time appears to cause anxiety in Foster as much as in her characters; how does she manage to intertwine the concept of time with the land? Although Foster’s confessional and descriptive style is realistic, does the “timelessness” with which she attempts to perpetuate her characters and their traditional lifestyle imply a form of mystification? If so, how are these myths different from the myths constructed by writers such as Headley or Cooper? Are there any traces in Foster’s depiction of nature of the notions of “the strenuous life” or “muscular Christianity”? Would certain characteristics of Foster’s representation of nature call for ecofeminist approaches, or would you say these are unnecessary? (See the next item for more on this topic.)

## 8.- Adirondack Women Writers: Perspectives for Literary Criticism.

In item 4.7. of the Main Page we considered the writings of Adelaide Crapsey and Martha Reben as part of the Adirondack literary history of tuberculosis patients. One could conclude, at least in comparison to the writings of Stevenson, that Crapsey and Reben refused to alienate themselves from the concept of nature, and that in contrast to Trudeau, they did not resort to advocating the advantages of sportsmanship to exalt the beneficial powers of the wilderness. This is, however, one possible interpretation. In spite of this commonality, Crapsey and Reben differ in their technical approach as much as in their content, and to place them under the same category on the mere basis of their sex would be in many ways erroneous.

In any case, there have been a number of scholars who, through their research of female forgotten or disregarded voices, have not only resurrected the writing of indispensable women to Adirondack literature, but have raised important issues regarding their position within local history and letters. Most notably, Kate Winter's *The Woman in the Mountain* (1989) has been a pioneer work for the reconsideration of Adirondack female writers (she includes Jeanne Robert Foster, Lucia Newell Oliviere, Adelaide Crapsey, Anne LaBastille, Martha Reben, Alice Wolf Gilborn, and Jean Rikhoff) and how the imaginary aids their comprehension of wilderness. Winter establishes some common links among these writers which include a) viewing wilderness "as a place to *reveal* rather than create character" (4); b) the fact that "their sense of well-being is intimately connected to the well-being of the land" (5); c) a clear influence of Thoreau's *Walden* and the value of domesticity within that lifestyle based on self-reliance in the natural space; and d) from a more psychoanalytic perspective, the presence of a strong maternal figure and a problematic paternal figure (appearing in most–but not all–of the cases). Winter's work has been continued by others and has opened new analytical considerations. Sarah Ann Wider and Ellen Percy Kraly's essay, "The Contour of Unknown Lives: Mapping Women's Experience in the Adirondacks" (2002) for instance, reaches out for a new way of deciphering the meaning of concrete places within the Adirondacks through a close reading of women's texts on those spaces, suggesting that perhaps locative femaleness can shed a new light on the traditionally male-centered depictions of the Adirondack wilderness.

The gender variable can of course leave fissures from which feminist appreciations can be articulated. In the interviews to Neal Burdick and Alice Wolf Gilborn (item 4.8. of the Main Page), such topic was raised and both writers expressed their belief that there was not necessarily an intrinsic, divisive axis (thematically and stylistically speaking) separating the writing of male and female Adirondack authors (although it may be recalled that an interesting observation was made by Neal Burdick regarding Anne LaBastille). Such an opinion is also held by the author of this case study, though needless to say, other critics may find that this is not so.

This is not to say that feminist or ecofeminist approaches should be ignored but that on the basis of their theoretical frames, some critics may find textual evidence to reinforce (eco)feminist postulations and categorical forms while other critics may resort to textual evidence contradicting these postulations and categories. In any case, scholars are asked to consider certain particular aspects of Adirondack women writers–aside from the ones that have been included in the Main Page of this case study–and establish an opinion of their own. This exercise should introduce scholars to–or expand their knowledge on–

ecofeminist forms of literary analysis, a field which has developed into several approaches in the last years and which, like feminism, has led to fundamental differences in the interpretation of what women's role is within nature. Like feminism as well, the origin of the several ecofeminist approaches is based on the common understanding of the woman as the "other," the oppressed group. For ecofeminists, man has historically abused nature in the same way that it has women. Acts of geographical discovery and conquest, settlement, sportsmanship, scientific dominion over nature, etc. stand as another form by which man asserts his virility through the colonization and violation of the "other." In the eyes of western patriarchy, women should be confined to the domestic sphere in the same way that wilderness is to be domesticated through agriculture, and the woman is an irrational, passionate creature in the same way that the wilderness is in need of the progress, science, and rationalization (represented by man) which enables civilization to "make the most" of the land. In other words, "woman is to man what nature is to culture" (Norwood, 324).

From this point of departure, ecofeminists groups have either praised or rejected the subsequent implication: the biological and/or cultural fate of the woman as the nurturer. This nurturing, motherly role clashes against the essential aggressiveness that defines western virility and that aims to the consolidation and perpetuation of up-down hierarchies (to use Karen J. Warren's terminology). In order to approach this topic, scholars should at least read a couple of the following additional bibliography: *The Death of Nature* by Carolyn Merchant, *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* by Karen Warren, and/or *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* by Val Plumwood (see Works Cited for details).
One of the interesting issues to consider, for example, would be the propensity to apply the pathetic fallacy and the manner and aims with which it is used by male and female writers. The pathetic fallacy, as defined by the nineteenth-century critic John Ruskin, consists in the attribution of human sentiments and feelings to inanimate objects. These inanimate objects are enhanced, "humanized" through personification, producing "a falseness in all our impressions of external things" (Ruskin, 453). Beyond inanimate objects, the pathetic fallacy has likewise been applied in depictions of animals in literature, film, the media, etc. In her piece, "Living with the Animals," Alice Wolf Gilborn refers to the pathetic fallacy and warns against conceptualizing animals in the humanistic terms inherent to its dynamics in a sphere beyond the said mediums:

> Man has imposed himself upon animals for centuries –he has hunted them, captured them, domesticated them, and taken their territory. He has enshrined them in his myths and literature . . . He has endowed them with his own emotions and characteristics, and while it may be generous to take animals so much to heart, it can also be corrupting. (138)

She continues by claiming that "wild animals are neither moral nor sentimental and they do not operate by man's rules and expectations" (139). (See item 4.8. of the Main Page for more on Alice Wolf Gilborn's opinions on the subject.) With this in mind, scholars are asked to consider the following excerpts from Martha Reben's *The Healing Woods*:

(1) (On racoon cubs): Before long they were climbing all over us. Two of them would cuddle down in my lap and eat whatever I gave them, but the third one always remained somewhat aloof.

"I don't know why it is," Mr. Rice remarked, "but you'll notice that one's always smarter than the others."

"Smart!" I was astonished. "I certainly call it smarter to accept a cookie than to run from it."

"That depends." He motioned to the coons in my lap. "In the woods it's the trustful animals that get killed off first. Suspicion is a mighty useful trait in an animal. That fellow over there who doesn't like to have you handle him will probably live the longest.

Once the mother coon saw her young well-established in our good graces, she abandoned them to us, and they became as tame as any domestic animals, remaining around camp most of the time. Having once weaned them, the old coon would bite and maul them unmercifully if they approached her, and they lived in terror of meeting her.

It must have been very disillusioning for the little coons to have the one they had learned to trust and depend upon, suddenly turn against them, and for a while they acted thoroughly bewildered. I suppose that this is Nature's stern way of developing a protective doubt and self-reliance in her wood folk. (87-88)

(2) One develops a deal of respect for the industry of small woods' animals. Chipmunks, squirrels, mice, all worked industriously to prepare for the long, cold winter ahead, interfering, to no great extent, with any other creature.

An outstanding exception of this is the weasel. He will kill purely for the pleasure of killing. His ruthlessness makes him the most unlikeable creature I have met in the woods. And yet to look at his sharp and eager little face and his graceful, sleek body, one would not suspect him of being a bad fellow at all. (117)

(3) (On deer hunting, standing before the target): It stopped behind a shoulder-high windfall, and with surprise I realized that the deer had not followed the runway. He was evidently an individualist. It turned its big ears forward, and gazed earnestly at me with its soft eyes as if to fathom my intention. I gazed back at the startled creature, equally fascinated. Suddenly, with an altogether graceful movement, it veered off and disappeared among the trees.

I looked down somewhat guiltily at the rifle in my hand. The deer had never been in a moment's danger, as far as I was concerned, for I had completely forgotten my rifle! (140)

8.1.- Scholars should to consider the excerpts above and establish whether or not Reben is inclined to use the pathetic fallacy. Although Reben sets aside myth-making discourse (traditionally considered male-centered), do her descriptions fit into the paradigmatic qualities of the pathetic fallacy? On the other hand, would you say that mythical language can itself construct a form of pathetic fallacy? Textual evidence is required for either argument, which the reader must as well connect to feminist implications based upon the ecofeminist works listed above. Is Reben's nurturing, motherly role toward some of the creatures determined by the fact that she is a woman? If so, would you argue that this pre-determined position is biologically or culturally based? Remember that in the Main Page we alluded to Reben's transition from a nurturing to a preservationist role; does this psychological shift in any way imply a transition from a female-centered state of mind to a masculine one, according to any ecofeminist criteria and to your own?

8.2.- Based on the discourse used, what are some of Reben's emotional differences in depicting the racoons and the deer? Why would you argue that she feels more emotionally attached to the racoons, while toward the deer she displays awe and respect? Would you say that potential sentiments toward an animal are determined by the animal itself (in terms of physical appearance, apparent sufficiency, and, for lack of a more scientific term, the animal's "cuteness factor")? (See Philip Terrie's comments on "charismatic megafauna" in item 4.8. of the Main Page.) Compare as well the

reaction that Reben has when encountering the deer to that of male authors that have been considered in this case study. Could a generalization be made according to which men are predisposed to sporting activities such as hunting and fishing while women must assimilate such activities? If so, would this again be a biological or a cultural predisposition on the men's part?

## 9.- Wilderness Aesthetic Considerations from Alternative Genres: From Ebenezer Emmons and Verplanck Colvin to Bill McKibben

In items 3.2. and 3.4. of the Main Page I briefly referred to the reports carried out by geologist Ebenezer Emmons (from 1836 to 1840; the final report being presented in 1842) and Verplanck Colvin, who in 1872 was appointed by the Legislature as the superintendent of the state topographical survey of the Adirondacks. The work that both men performed was crucial for placing the Adirondacks on the map, acquiring some insight as to its natural features, and for proposing hypothetical possibilities of the region's future. The reason why this item has been placed at the end of this section is so scholars may consider the entirety of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century thought that has been presented in the Main Page and in the previous items of this section in order to approach both reports not solely from a scientific perspective, but from an aesthetic one. Although the reports are not easily accessible, some excerpts are provided here so as to let the reader approach the questions analytically. These extracts are not necessarily representative of the full reports, for topographical descriptions and the information regarding forms of scientific measurement generally prevail throughout the full texts. What these quotes do provide is a contemplation of how the contemporary cultural perspectives over nature germinate within the scientific discourse. An indispensable reading for this item should be Philip Terrie's *Forever Wild: Environmental Aesthetics and the Adirondack Forest Preserve* (see Works Cited; 1994 edition titled *Forever Wild: A Cultural History of Wilderness in the Adirondacks*), which offers a more in-depth perspectives on both reports.

From *Geology of New York, Part II* by Ebenezer Emmons:

(1) (On the Adirondack Pass): In viewing this great precipice, no feeling of disappointment is felt in consequence of the expectation having exceeded the reality. The conception of this imposing mass of rock necessarily falls greatly short of what is experienced when it comes to be seen. Those who visit this Pass ought by no means to be satisfied with seeing it from below: they should look down from above, and over the hanging precipice . . .

> We look upon the falls of Niagara with awe, and a feeling of our insignificance; but much more are we impressed with the great and the sublime, in the view of the simple naked rock of the Adirondack Pass. (217-218)

(2) (On the mountains, surface and lakes of Hamilton County): During the preceding topographical details, I have not forgotten that my business is with geology. But while this is true, I would remember that in a community constituted like ours, many individuals require recreation during certain seasons; and while I am occupying time and space in details of this kind, I am also making known a new field for relaxation from business –one which has peculiar advantages and many resources for restoring health and spirits, such as are unknown at the more fashionable watering places. In this course, therefore, I feel that I am not travelling out of the sphere of usefulness. The breezes of Hamilton are invigorating; the lake scenery is magnificent, and the exercise it calls for is healthful; and the invalid who, after reaching these romantic wilds, makes

> a rational use of the forests and lakes and the skies which invest them, and returns dissatisfied with what he has received, I should pronounce not only difficult to please, but mistaken in the objects of his search and in the character of his wants. (416)

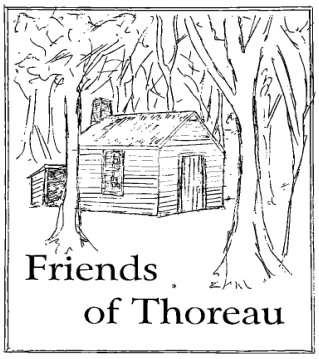
From "Mountain Measuring" by Verplanck Colvin:

> During the years that have passed, I have been enabled not only to extend the survey but to study the growth of settlements throughout the region, so as to obtain an insight into the probable ultimate character of the development of the country; to which attention must be paid by our state administration in order to properly aid and forward this growth where it has found a place in natural channels leading toward permanent results . . .
>
> It is almost as wild and quite as beautiful. But close behind our exploring footsteps came the blazed line, marked with axe upon the trees; the trail, soon trodden into mire; the bark shanty, picturesque enough but soon surrounded by a grove of stumps; while Skylight, so recently the untrodden summit, with its barrier of dwarf forest, is now from this new pass by a new trail an ascent of only so many minutes . . . The first romance is gone forever . . . The woods are thronged; bark and log huts prove insufficient; hotels spring up as though by magic, and the air resounds with laughter, song, and jollity. The wild trails, once jammed with logs, are cut clear by the axes of the guides, and ladies clamber to the summits of those once untrodden peaks. The genius of change has possession of the land . . .
>
> But while these changes have opened to travel many of the most interesting nooks among our mountains, they have only rendered more marked, by contrast, the wildness of the remainder, and the unvisited wilderness centres or cores are still left in all their sylvan purity . . . No unselfish person will for a moment regret that his once solitary pleasures are now shared in by the many. The sportsman has still a thousand unfrequented recesses–if he will seek them–where he may travel unmolested.
>
> The region is already the summer home of untold thousands–a public pleasure ground–a wilderness park to all intents and purposes. (357-358)

Scholars are asked to consider the excerpts above and to find textual evidence suggesting the influence of romanticism, transcendentalism, and muscular Christianity. Is the notion of landscape tied to the search for a national identity in these excerpts? Does the dichotomy between the sublime and the beautiful present itself? If so, do you think that it might have in any way been applied as well in the more scientifically-based sections of the reports? In other words, can the categories of the sublime and the beautiful go beyond mere aesthetic appreciation to a) justify the preservation of the wilderness; and/or b) justify utilitarian purposes? What uses of the land do Emmons and Colvin propose in these excerpts? Do they echo any of the writings we have seen throughout the Main Page and the previous items of this section?

Despite their tone, Emmons and Colvin believed deep down that the land had to succumb to progress. (More overt was the opinion of Farrand Benedict, who contributed some work to the Natural History Survey, and who ardently insisted in the need to build an effective transportation system within the Adirondacks. On the other extreme was the writer George Washington Sears, "Nessmuk," who "condemned the lumber companies' construction of dams on Adirondack lakes and [who] found Colvin's canal project equally offensive" (Terrie 1985: 87).) Still, Colvin seems to regret the devouring manner in which the forests were being put to use. Are these sentiments based on aesthetic preoccupations or do they also reflect tinges of preservationist and/or conservationist principles? If so, are these preservationist/conservationist considerations the same that you would find in contemporary ecologist discourse?

For this last question, scholars should contrast the conservationist attitude of the late nineteenth century with more contemporary environmental writing such as that of Bill McKibben. Does McKibben advocate preservationism or conservationism? Is his choice based on environmental idealism or does he pragmatically consider other factors? Does McKibben innovate in any way environmental thought? Are there visible traces of McKibben's philosophy in the writings of Emmons and Colvin (or in any of the other writers that have been viewed in this case study)? The recommended readings from McKibben for this item are *The End of Nature* and *Hope, Human and Wild* (see Works Cited). The overall argument for this item should be oriented to whether or not discursive displays of preservationist ideals conflict with utilitarian plans for nature. Are these attitudes completely contradictory? It appears that they were not so for Emmons or Colvin; but what about for McKibben and within the current ecological crisis?




# Adirondack Writing and the Wilderness Aesthetic

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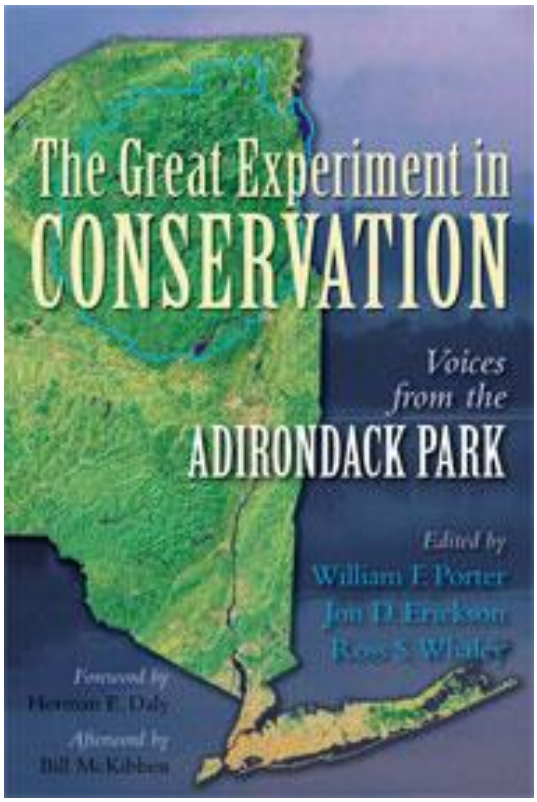
## GUIDING STUDENTS' DISCUSSION

### 1.- The Science and Policy Behind the Literature. What is the Essence of Ecocriticism?

In the Main Page we reviewed the history of the Adirondacks and how it has recurrently influenced literary themes, topics and the formation of an Adirondack identity. But, is it true that the Adirondacks might finally be "saved"? Is ecological restoration and long-term cohabitation of wild species and humans in wilderness habitats sustainable in a balanced way? (See the summary in item 2 of the Main Page to recall the data on ecology and wildlife of the Adirondack Park.)

In order to have students revisit the topic of Adirondack biodiversity and submerge into an analysis of the Park's evolution in the last fifty years, each student should choose one aspect of Adirondack ecology as it stands today. For example, some of these topics could include the record of disturbance of the upstate forests, wildlife exploitation in the Adirondacks, or the degree of human impact through a study of the effects of acid rain and mercury deposition, or through a study of the quality of water resources. Students should research the history, diagnose the present status of their topic, and analyze how it relates and contributes to the "forever wild" ecological commitment.

The main book summarizing issues of this nature as well as other institutional, socioeconomic and cultural aspects is the celebrated summary of decades of research edited by William F. Porter, Jon D. Erickson, and Ross S. Whaley, *The Great Experiment in Conservation: Voices from the Adirondack Park* (see Section on Works Cited).




This exercise should also help those students more versed in the humanities to evaluate to what extent nature writing and ecocriticism can be methodologically addressed as an area of research without previous scientific and socioeconomic backgrounds. Can ecocriticism and adjacent fields, such as ecofeminism, evolve as solid modes of literary criticism without previous study of the methodology and language of natural and social sciences? What role does the discipline of literature have–and/or should have– in conservation and environmentalism?

Although a relatively new field of research, ecocriticism is not unidirectional: different methodologies address different concerns both at a literary and at an environmental, more practical level. Research and consider the different methodologies within ecocriticism. Why do some ecocritic approaches have more social impact than others? What methodologies have attempted to imitate the organic dynamics of nature through purely literary aspects (as for example, behavioral patterns between fictional characters as a reflection of the conduct between some animal species; understanding the tragic and the comic genres in Darwinian terms; or the attempt to create "ecological texts," whereupon form, style, content, characterization, etc. resemble processes of hierarchies and symbiosis of an ecosystem)? Suggested readings for this exercise include two works of the ecocriticism canon: *The Ecocriticism Reader*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, and *The Comedy of Survival* by Joseph Meeker (see Works Cited for details).

## 2.- Deciphering Wilderness Historiography: A Critical Outlook on the Histories of Nature, Wilderness, and its People

Throughout the Main Page a limited number of sources have recurrently been used as solid referents to Adirondack history. These have mainly included: *Contested Terrain* (1997) by Philip Terrie, *The Adirondacks* (1997) by Paul Schneider, *A Century Wild 1885-1995. Essays Commemorating the Centennial of the Adirondack Forest Preserve* (1985) edited by Neal Burdick, *Adirondack Country* (1954) by William Chapman White, *The Adirondacks, Fulton Chain-Big Moose Region: The Story of a Wilderness* (1933) by Joseph Grady, and *A History of the Adirondacks* (1921) by Alfred L. Donaldson. (See Works Cited for full details. Indicated between parentheses in this item is the year of the first publication, not the year of the editions used for this case study.) All of the sources were written and published after the beginning of the conservation era. However, each of them approaches the history of the Adirondacks from a different position, both stylistically and more importantly, with the attempt to provide the evidence necessary to support an underlying thesis. *Contested Terrain*, for example, as the name indicates, follows the idea that how we perceive the Adirondacks is determined by its historical condition as a region that challenged the dominion and the mentality of men, a region that tested the skills as much as the mindset of its visitors and settlers. As one reviewer put it,

> Philip G. Terrie casts his concise, tightly organized history of the Adirondack region of Northern New York State in terms of continuing contests for control and use of the land. He moves from the era of exploration and exploitation in the early decades of the nineteenth century to the present, spending little time on artists, photographers, and other image makers, or on sporting life, scenic topography, the tourist experience, or other often-treaded subjects in Adirondack history, except as these things intersect his account of ever-changing but never resolved conflicts over the land. (Tatham, 197)

To name another example, *The Adirondacks*, on the other hand, is structured according to biographical sketches and anecdotes from the Adirondack past and the present, weaving a narrative of regional stories full of detail where responses to romantic, utilitarian, and adventurous perceptions of the wilderness are revealed. *The Adirondacks* recalls Grady's 1933 work, where local anecdotes are vividly presented to the reader, thus contributing to the sense of a true regional culture and tradition.

Modern histories of natural regions and wilderness areas are generally heirs to the critical approach of Roderick Nash. In 1967, Nash reinvented the historical approach to wilderness with *Wilderness and the American Mind*, also a recurrent source in this case study, and as Terrie claimed in his interview, a model piece which he followed for *Forever Wild. Wilderness and the American Mind* was the first work to deeply explore America's attitude toward the wilderness from the premise that "wilderness" lacks a steady, complete definition. Rather, "wilderness" is a relative term, functioning more as an adjective than as a noun. In his review, J. Leonard Bates wrote that "the essential theme of the book is that a transformation has occurred in American thinking about wild places–from fear and hatred to appreciation and even reverence–but that such a change has not assured real protection of the remaining areas" (1612). As opposed to the century-long tradition of natural historians and scientists such as William Bartram or John James Audubon, who had emphasized on indexing America's biodiversity with the hopes of delineating a national identity, and contrary to social historians who had focused more on portraits of locals, legends, and institutions (such as the Adirondack

histories published before 1960), Nash appeals to the dynamics of ideological continuums. From the position of an outsider, rather than an eloquent orator, he provides a scope of America where each religious or philosophical tendency is scrutinized from its position as a cause and a consequence, therefore illuminating the reader on the shifting conceptions of wilderness up to the present day. In a way, Nash's work answered more to the patterns of historiography, a growing field of interest since the 1950s, than to those of histories. Michael Lewis, editor of *American Wilderness: A New History* (2007), also an important source for this case study, describes how Nash redirected wilderness history:

> Not only did Nash capture the wilderness pulse of America, he helped to define that pulse, so that subsequent generations of environmental scholars and activists discussed American wilderness in Nash's terms, with his examples, and with his heroes . . . In the decades since Nash's path-breaking book, dozens of historians followed in his footsteps and studied different aspects of the history of American wilderness ideas and politics. (7, 8)

Though wilderness history and historiography is more often perceived by students as a field from which to gather facts, theorizing about historiographical discourse is an excellent exercise to understand the reason, purpose, and relevance of specific approaches to the wilderness. Students are invited to read and gather material on an American wilderness area (it could be on the Adirondacks, though other regions as subject matters could perhaps stimulate students' creativity and critical views further, as they have not yet been familiarized with other local histories) and to consider the focus of the histories before and after the 1960s. Two or three short histories should suffice, so that the student may have time and a limited material on which to work on. Students should keep in mind key issues such the writer's thesis, the book's contextualization within other wilderness histories (both about the chosen region and about America at large), the choices made by the author in terms of content or style, whether prime focus is set on scientific, sociological, or ecological facts, etc. Reviews of the selected histories will be helpful for the student's analysis.

## 3.- Vermont and New York Geology: Beluga Whales Swimming in the Adirondacks

The case of the beluga whale has aided geological studies as to how the Adirondacks were formed. In 1849 railroad workers constructing the line between Rutland and Burlington, in Vermont, unexpectedly found the bones of a marine creature. Though initially the workers believed the bones were those of a horse skeleton, careful scientific examination carried out by the naturalist Zadock Thompson of the University of Vermont revealed that they belonged to an adult beluga, or white whale. The whale was to be known as "Charlotte," after the Vermont location near which it was found. Further research was carried out by George H. Perkins, and continues today. It is believed that Charlotte is between twelve thousand and ten thousand years old. Hypotheses regarding how Charlotte (and other beluga remains found later on) reached that area have revealed interesting theories regarding the geological evolution of Vermont and the Adirondacks. Despite the fact that Charlotte was technically found in Vermont, since the preserving sediments were part of what had once been the Champlain Sea (remember that the freshwater Lake Champlain is also part of the Adirondack Park, marking the border between Vermont and New York), the whale is also part of Adirondack history.

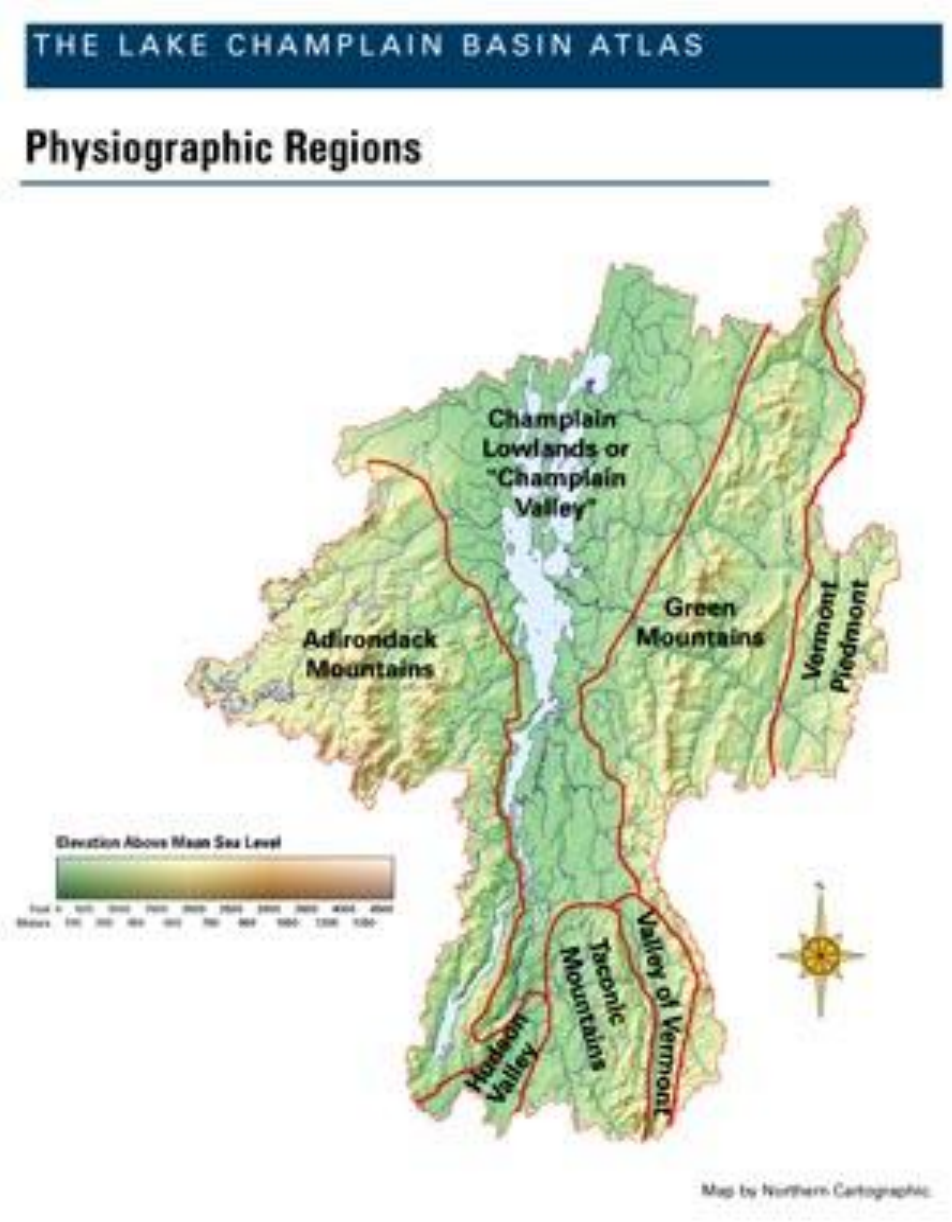
Information on Charlotte is exhibited at The Wild Center, the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks (see picture below).


*Small exhibition on Charlotte at The Wild Center, the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks in Tupper Lake.*

*Logo of The Wild Center. Courtesy of The Wild Center.*

In order to find possible answers to Charlotte's story, students are required to research the geological evolution of the Adirondacks and the Champlain Basin, with particular interest on the region's glacial retreat. What were the causes of the retreat and what other effects did it have? What kind of environment did the Champlain Sea sustain? Have other marine species been discovered in the Champlain Basin? What hypotheses surround Charlotte's history? What lines of research does the study of Charlotte provide today?

Introductory geological notes on the Adirondacks are found in item 2 of the Main Page. See Online Sources as well for websites on Charlotte and Adirondack and Vermont geology.




*Courtesy of the Lake Champlain Basin Program. See Links to Online Sources and Acknowledgements.*

**4.- The History of the Recovery of Adirondack Species: The Case of the Beaver and the Moose**

These two animal species each have a unique history as part of the Adirondack biodiversity. Their disappearance and, in the beaver's case, successful recovery, was motivated by different factors, ranging from the threat of human industry to biological considerations. By tracing the history of each of the species, students will approach fields of research such as wildlife management, and wildlife exploitation. These issues are similar and related to the discussion presented in item 1 of this section. In this case, however, students will approach two cases more deeply so as to contrast the results of human intervention in the recovery of animal species through two particular cases.

The success of the fur industry during the second half of the seventeenth century resulted in the almost complete extinction of beavers in the Adirondacks by the beginning of the eighteenth century. Beaver fur was especially sought for the European market, particularly for making hats. Native Americans also actively participated in trapping, and the Adirondacks would for some time be known as *Couchsachrage*, meaning "beaver-hunting grounds." The annihilation of the beaver was fast and fulminating in the seventeenth century. As William F. Porter describes:

> The Dutch, and later the British, arriving via the Hudson River to the south of the Adirondacks, allied with the Iroquois. The French arrived via the St. Lawrence to the north and allied themselves with the Algonquin peoples. Together they exploited fort the periphery and then the interior of the Adirondacks, and by the 1620s trading posts were well established in Beverwyck (later Albany) and Montreal. With no regulation of the harvest, the beaver population was nearly eliminated from all but the most remote portions of the Adirondacks within about 30 years. By 1650, trappers and traders were moving west beyond the Great Lakes. (88)

By the 1890s, only two beaver populations in the north of Saranac Lake were accounted for in the entire Adirondacks. In 1895 a protective law was passed, but the growth of the scarce population was slow, especially since poachers still sought the by now rare furs. What followed was a complicated process of beaver reintroduction (the first attempt was performed in 1904 and the second in 1906), problems of overpopulation, the re-opening of trapping seasons and subsequent new prohibitions against it. The reintroduction of the specie proved highly successful, despite the ups and downs of the process, and today colonies of beavers roam the Adirondacks once again. Trapping regulations aim to sustain the beaver population while maintaining the local economy of the fur industry.

Students are asked to research the particulars of the attempts at reintroducing the beaver in the early 1900s. How many beavers were released? What was the ratio of growth? What was "The Army of Liberation" and how was the project for the recuperation of beaver publicized and viewed by the locals? What associations, organizations, or institutions carried the responsibility? Why did overpopulation become a nuisance and why was the beaver perceived as a pest shortly before 1920? What resolutions were passed in order to control once more the beaver colonies? How did the fur market evolve throughout the second half of the twentieth century and how did this affect the business of trapping in the Adirondacks? How are beavers and beaver dams helpful for the conservation of forests and natural reservoirs?

In the case of the moose, human help in the reintroduction was not as successful. As early as 1862, at the dawn of the Gilded Age, the guide and hermit Alvah Dunning was claiming to have killed the last moose in the Adirondacks in Raquette Lake. Dunning's lifelong hunting had contributed to the extinction of moose, for, as Alfred L. Donaldson reported, the guide and his father "often brought down three or four in a day, and occasionally as many as five" (108). Forty years after Dunning reportedly shot the last specimen, active efforts to reintroduce the moose would result in fruitless labor. The Association for Restoring Moose to the Adirondacks, organized in 1900, imported around fifteen wild Canadian moose and released them in the summer of 1902 in the vicinity of Camp Uncas. Despite the general enthusiasm of locals, who closely followed the updates and news of sightings of the specimens, most of the released animals were killed one way or another within the first two years. As Grady recalled, one of the cows was shot by a terrified woman, unaware that since its captivity, the docile moose had practically been domesticated. After that,

> Other fatalities followed. Some time later a moose was discovered lying dead near the shore of Eighth Lake where it had been shot in wanton sport and left to rot in the woods. The identity of the killer never came to light. Two more were shot near Raquette Lake, and their deaths swelled the list of unsolved mysteries. The bull got by for nearly two years before a pot hunter laid it low beside the Brown's Tract Inlet. Of the fifteen or more animals liberated along the water courses extending from the Fulton Chain to the Saranacs, none survived the experimental stage. (278)

Needless to say, the project was a complete failure. Yet more recent evidence suggests that there was another, additional reason for the extinction of the moose and the unsuccessful attempts to recover it.

*Display of pelt harvests that sustained the fur industry in the Adirondacks. Exhibited at the Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake.*

In the 1970s moose populations were growing in the areas surrounding the Adirondacks, and slowly but progressively sightings within the boundaries of the Park would be reported throughout the following years. It is especially during the 1990s when close studies have stated the possibility of there being permanent breeding populations within the Adirondacks. By 1998, around seventy specimens were accounted for in the region, and its growth since then has shown promising results.

Students should research the likely hypothesis of why, aside from the threats of hunting, the moose had such difficulties in recovering. What evidence supports this hypothesis and what evidence contradicts it? What other mammal species was the moose depending on for its survival, according to this hypothesis? Students are also asked to compare the implications of successful and unsuccessful reintroduction of animal species and to find other cases in other wilderness areas of the United States in which a species may have recovered (or is in the process of recovering) completely on its own, without the aid of man.

## 5.- Issues for the Consideration of Big Carnivores: From the Adirondacks to American History and Popular Culture

(See Philip Terrie's interview in item 4.8. of the Main Page for this topic.) The recovery of big carnivores in the Adirondacks is a current issue for wilderness conservationists of the Northeast. In the second half of the nineteenth century the lynx, the cougar, and the wolf were extirpated from the region. After careful planning and scientific study, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, more than seventy wild lynxes were released in the Park's northeast section. Contrary to expectations, the restoration was unsuccessful, and little plans have been made since them for future attempts. In the case of the cougar, sightings in the last few decades suggest that maybe the species had not been completely extirpated from the Adirondacks. Beginning in the 1960s, there were some reports of sightings in the area north of the High Peaks. By 1990, sightings had dramatically increased and although a higher concentration of specimens was still in the north, other reports attested to their presence in other sections of the Park. There are speculations as to whether or not the cougar ever disappeared from the Adirondacks, whether current populations are only the outcome of migratory routes of mountain lions travelling from other regions, and there are also speculations as to the veracity of many of the reported sightings. For the moment, the future of the cougar remains uncertain.

The case of the wolf is currently the center of heated discussions on conservation, and its restoration should not be considered as an isolated operation. Once a widespread predator throughout North America, by 1960 the wolf was practically extinct in the United States. Its inclusion in the Endangered Species Act in 1973 marked the transition towards wolf conservation and restoration programs, and although reintroduction is yet to occur in the Adirondacks, populations have showed promising results in the Great Lakes region, the Southwest, and in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. Students should be exposed to the case of the wolf and other large predators in the Adirondacks so as to comprehend its contextualization within the national frame.

The wolf, for example, recurrently appears in Adirondack literature. From hunting stories by guides–particularly John Cheney–and other woodsmen–such as Atwell Martin, the "North Lake hermit" that Byron-Curtiss commemorated in his pieces–, to

tall tales, and contemporary narrative and poetry, the wolf, either by presence or by absence, seems to procure the Adirondacks with a "fragment" of identity. Students, especially those interested in ecocriticism, should discuss the role of the wolf in Adirondack and American literature in general, with particular emphasis on the transition of its symbolic value (from its association to terror, threat, and danger, to its more contemporary image as an evoker of nostalgia, traditional native ways of rural and Indian communities, and as a victim to the progress of civilization). The poetic potential of the wolf should be studied from different time periods and genres: from nineteenth-century notes and narratives of locals to the classics of writers like Jack London; and from pantheistic appreciations of the wolf to more secularized portrayals.

In more recent bestsellers, such as Douglas Adams's *Last Chance to See* (see Works Cited), humor bordering on the absurd has proven to be an effective method to raise awareness on endangered species worldwide. Considering the analysis of popular fiction presented in item 4.4. of the Main Page, discuss the possibilities of popular literature to raise issues such as wildlife exploitation and recovery programs of endangered species. A consideration of the wolf in popular culture may prove helpful, and an interesting issue for debate may perhaps be the contrasting image between wolves and bears in American popular culture. Despite the fact that there have been far more records of human deaths or injuries by bear than by wolf attacks, the bear has gained a reputation for being friendly and "cute" (popular depictions of this idea are numerous: from Smoky the Bear and Winnie the Pooh, to children's teddy bears), while the wolf has for centuries carried the stigma of the "big bad wolf." What could be the origins of such contrasting images and representations? Are they particular to American popular literature and culture or do they also reflect European popular conceptions of bears and wolves? A helpful source on this topic is Jon T. Coleman's *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America* (see Works Cited).

Above I have made a very brief summary of the extinction and the current state of affairs for the lynx, the cougar, and the wolf in the Adirondacks. Students should discuss what they think are the essential factors to be considered for the possibility of restoring a carnivore in a certain region. Factors in planning the reintroduction are determined by the species' characteristics: travelling distances, migratory routes, usual food, whether they are an "umbrella" species or not, birth rates, competitiveness with other species, whether they are "invasive" or not, etc. But of course, many of these factors depend on the habitat that the selected region will provide. Students should research and discuss the reasons why the restoration of the lynx in the Adirondacks was unsuccessful and what the local controversies surrounding the possibility of restoring the wolf are. For example, what does the presence of the coyote have to do with what kind of wolf (gray or eastern timber wolf) can be reintroduced? Does the presence of wolves really imply potential losses of cattle from attacks? Since wolves can travel several miles in a single night, are the Adirondacks large enough to sustain a considerable population and what are the dangers in case populations should cross over the Park's borders? Should the hunting and trapping of wolves be allowed once the specimens have grown to a considerable population? What are the pros and cons of restoration for year-round residents? Recommended readings for this topic are Rainer H. Brocke's "A Wildlife for a Wilderness" and David Mech's "Wolf Restoration to the Adirondacks: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Public Participation in the Decision" (see Works Cited).

Lastly, students should become acquainted with the evolvement of game laws in the United States. Because of the threat they pose, large predators have of course followed a different pattern from other mammals in terms of the transition from game laws to conservation and preservation policies (though of course, as we have seen, each species, no matter what class and whether it be a carnivore or a herbivore has particularities in terms of its own survival and the survival of co-existing species which cannot be ignored). In any case, through the example of the evolvement of legislative measures on wolves, the Adirondacks can illustrate for students the historical shift from animal extermination to conservation. Students will find that other interests aside from the protection of domestic livestock were involved from very early on. The following excerpt from Nicholas A. Robinson's "Tracking a New Relationship: The Wolf in New York Law" is a brief description of the circumstances under which wolves were exterminated and can serve students as an initial guideline from which to start:

> From the early seventeenth century onward, the laws of New York, like those of other colonies and states, settled the practice to establish bounties for the killing of wolves . . . Even when the threat of wolves was not apparent, the presence of bounty laws stimulated bounty hunting as a ready means for hunters to earn money, and wolves were tracked and killed. Bounty hunters would track a wolf far afield of the township that offered the bounty, and then bring the dead wolf to the local government that offered the highest sum . . . Bounty hunters would bring in the ear of a wolf as proof of the killing and claim a bounty. In New York City, so many wolf ears appeared that the city came to require hunters to produce the entire head, with both ears attached, to avoid being obliged to pay the bounty twice . . .
>
> By the mid-nineteenth century, wolves were rare if not nonexistent in New York and most of the northeast United States. It appears to have been a desire to conserve tax dollars, rather than any change in attitude toward wolves, that prompted repeal of bounty provisions. Indeed, in an echo of such attitudes about predators as threats to agriculture or other social values, in 1955 New York enacted authority for town boards of supervisors to pay bounties for the killing of foxes.
>
> From the end of the nineteenth century until World War II, the laws and policies among other states and among federal agencies continued to promote the elimination of wolves . . . As a result, by 1973, wolves had been eradicated, through the bounty systems or the efficient use of poisons, from most of their habitat in the eastern states, the Great Plains, and the western public lands. (98-99)

*Adirondack wolf recovery design by the Conservation Biology Institute.*
*Courtesy of the Conservation Biology Institute. See Links to Online Sources and Acknowledgements.*

## 6.- Revaluating the Significance of Folklore in Literature and Writing Courses: Education in Local community Colleges

Students are asked to consider the argument posed by Andrew Shawn Andermatt in the following article. Andermatt is assistant professor of English in Clinton Community College (Plattsburgh, New York). "Humor, History, and Tall Tales: Rereading the Adirondack College Student" was published in *Voices*, the journal of the New York Folklore Society, in Vol. 33, Fall-Winter 2007. Permission for reprinting in this case study granted by Andrew Shawn Andermatt.

**HUMOR, HISTORY, AND TALL TALES:**
**REREADING THE ADIRONDACK COLLEGE STUDENT**

ANDREW SHAWN ANDERMATT

**At the end of summer some things are constant in the Adirondacks:** tourists depart, leaves begin to change color, and local community college professors sit at their desks reading hundreds of "what I did over summer vacation" and "why marijuana should be legalized" essays. Teachers constantly ask themselves what they can do to better the quality of student writing. Semester after semester, teachers revamp course content and delivery, hoping that this semester will be different.

Analyzing our audience may lead to more productive responses from students. Close study of community-college demographics in the Adirondack Park indicates that a majority of students are full-time employees, many of whom are working in technical fields. With so many working students fully engrossed in established careers and the community college continuing to attract a wide range of students with varying educational goals, the curriculum for introductory writing and literature courses for non–liberal arts majors needs to be readjusted. Adirondack folk tales—particularly those contained in Helen Escha Tyler's Mountain Memories: Folk Tales of the Adirondacks and Don Edgley's *The "Edge" of Humor and Other Stories of Lake Placid People*— encourage students to adopt an appreciation of literature and local history, establish topics for writing that are meaningful to the student, and promote lifelong appreciation for literature.

### A More Interdisciplinary Education

One of the most common complaints in a first-year writing or literature course at the community college is that the material is hardly relevant to students' interests. After several years of hearing this complaint, chances are the students are right. While William Shakespeare and James Joyce may be interesting and valuable to the English major, studying the classics may indeed be merely busy work to the student pursuing a career in business administration or accounting. The goal of an introductory writing or literature course is to offer material that sharpens the students' critical, analytical, and writing abilities, but it seems that these objectives are repeatedly glossed over in favor of the timeworn argument that reading classics will make students well-rounded.

David MacWilliams, author of "Using the 'Hometown' Novel in Composition 101," has already begun integrating "hometown" novels into his writing courses. He states, "Many of the students

I have worked with over the years have expressed a sense of disconnectedness between themselves and the novels they have been assigned to read in high school or college courses" (2005, 67). Students who are required to take literature courses are often as disconnected from the characters they encounter in novels as they are from the idea of becoming English majors. "At eighteen or nineteen years of age," MacWilliams continues, "their horizons have not been pushed much beyond the mountain peaks that surround the valley" (2005, 67). How, then, should we go about creating a literature or writing course that will connect students, both traditional and nontraditional, to issues central to their lives?

The ramifications of using regional folklore in introductory courses point to an answer to this question. In the last thirty-five years or so, elementary and secondary educators have regularly introduced folklore in the classroom. Red Riding Hood, Paul Bunyan, and the Brothers Grimm have all found their way into the elementary classroom and have been established as useful teaching tools. Unfortunately, folklore—and most importantly, regional folklore—has been slow to find its way into the college curriculum, especially at smaller colleges. Some colleges may offer a topics course in folklore every couple of semesters, but folklore or local color stories are not a regular part of general writing and literary instruction.

One of the reasons folklore has been neglected by college curricula is that it is often regarded as "mass cultural" literature, a tag typically reserved for drugstore romances and comic books. Elizabeth Radin Simons, however, in her book *Student Worlds, Student Words: Teaching Writing through Folklore*, offers an alternate way to view folklore. She asserts, "To know our folklore—the folklore of our country, our ethnicity, our family, our childhood, our age group, and our ethnic group— is to learn to know ourselves in new ways" (1990, 1). Modern folklore is popular among students, and they acquire new perspectives of the physical region around them and the people who inhabit that region. Students become experts when it comes to knowing their own local folklore, contributing much of the ethnographic background needed for such studies. In "Writing from a Sense of Place," Paul Lindholt argues, "Students urged to explore and develop connections to nature in their personal lives are more apt to thrive as scholars and postgraduate professionals" (1999, 7). Experience, memory, and personal history lead students to a more interdisciplinary education.

Lesser-known local writers are often left out of the "elite" mix, despite the usefulness of their message. Adjusting the local college classroom curriculum can be done with very little effort on the part of the instructor. While the literary heavy hitters will forever remain central to the literary classroom and imperative for advanced English majors to spend late-night hours decoding, the non- English major deserves a more suitable alternative. For many community college students, reading texts by local authors about local concerns—particularly concerns relevant to the workforce—would be more beneficial in the introductory classroom.

## An Education in Local Color

William Chapman White addresses the Adirondack demographic in his book *Adirondack Country*. Here White defines the stereotypical "Adirondacker" as a laborer at heart and by trade. White says, "The Adirondack native-born are tough people, slow to make friends, slower to lose them" (1967, 33). The "typical" Adirondack man is difficult to name, but White's description of them often revolves around what they do for a living. For example, Harold McCasland is a "fine smalltown cabinetmaker"; no urgent house call has ever interfered with his recreational fishing and hunting. Fred Ransom is a farm-to-farm salesman. Jerry LaBarge is the grandson of a French-Canadian lumberjack who drives his truck in the most dangerous terrain. Ed Smith made millions in cottonseed oil. Joe Herder runs tourist cabins on Highway 9 during the summer. "One thing these men have in common," White asserts, "is they all know the woods of the Adirondack country and they love them" (1967, 33). So what makes the local community college students different from Adirondack laborers as portrayed by White? The answer is

simple—nothing.

White's portrait of Adirondack people is still just as fresh today as it was in the 1950s. He applies accurate "local color" to the characters he sketches. In one of his most important assertions he states, "The continuous flow of summer people, providing jobs, opportunities, and endless jokes, has had a profound influence on the region" (1967, 34). Helen Escha Tyler's *Mountain Memories: Folk Tales of the Adirondacks* illustrates White's point explicitly. Tyler, a native of the Adirondacks and daughter of a laborer, wrote news and feature stories for the *Adirondack Daily Enterprise.* Her column relied on telling folktales and tall tales as its main feature, and many of these tales found their way into her books.

To evaluate the effectiveness of Tyler's tales in the classroom, we should first understand the general aim of folklore. Bette Bosma's *Fairy Tales, Fables, Legends, and Myths: Using Folk Literature in Your Classroom* provides an overview of the use of folklore in the pre-college classroom. While Bosma's book is directed toward elementary and high school instructors, the basic ideas can be applied to the college classroom. One of Bosma's initial claims is that folklore serves as adventure and humor that is rich in language. The authors of "Folk Literature: Preserving the Storyteller's Magic" contend that students enjoy folklore because of its humor, wit, and happy endings, but folklore is important because of its emphasis on honesty, hard work, mercy and forgiveness, gratitude, kindness, and learning across different cultures (Young et al. 2004, 782).

Helen Escha Tyler's story "Scoop Shovel Express," for example, illustrates the need to have fun with our work. In this case, workers, particularly Asa Lawrence, who Tyler focuses on in several stories, make their work (mainly logging) on Whiteface Mountain not only easier for themselves, but fun as well. While there are clear indications of the importance of work done faster for profit, the characters seem to find ways to amuse themselves when alone in the vast wilderness. The narrator says, "When it came time for Asa to go back down to Wilmington for more supplies he took along a large scoop shovel with which he had supplied himself. In those days he had the mountain pretty much to himself so there was no one to watch his peculiar movements" (1974, 13).

Some local color stories, especially those by Lake Placid native Don Edgley, emphasize or focus on the people we meet on the job. Edgley's humor and wit make his tales enjoyable, but the relevance to student's lives make them all the more fun in the classroom. Reflecting on working at the old Grand Union in Lake Placid, Edgley relays tales not only of hard work and colorful characters, but also of trickery and good-hearted pranks. A prime example is when Edgley describes placing rotted Limburger cheese in the tailpipe of a coworker's automobile. Of course, the provocation for this prank comes from an earlier episode, when Edgley's coworkers smeared the back handle of a delivery truck with Limburger (2003, 21). Edgley, however, does not always come out on top. In another prank, he stuffs a potato in the exhaust pipe of a butcher's car to prevent it from starting. When the butcher starts the car, the potato rockets out of the tailpipe, striking Edgley in the shin.

Edgley's stories of the Grand Union often center on the people he meets. In one case, a customer with a foreign accent—an elite, upper-crust woman—asks the employee at the meat counter if he has "'some-sings' different today, maybe 'some-sings' you don't always have" (2003, 22). Bill, the employee, offers her lamb's tongue. The customer responds by saying that she would never eat anything that comes from an animal's mouth. Bill sarcastically offers her a dozen eggs.

Both Tyler's and Edgley's tales could provide a myriad of assignments that would be relevant to the Adirondack student. In a composition course, a traditional first paper topic might ask for reflection on a personal experience. MacWilliams starts by covering autobiographical topics and then moves into topics that affect the college, town, or the physical area itself. "Students

gradually realize that their home territory has a history of its own, with issues that matter," he asserts (2005, 68). After reading Tyler's "Scoop Shovel Express" or Edgley's depiction of the old Grand Union, students may be asked to write a personal narrative discussing a run-in with a colleague or customer from their job. Another topic might ask a student to write a personal paper describing a shortcut he or she took to complete a job more quickly. The follow-up question might ask the student to elaborate on whether or not the shortcut was effective.

Adirondack folklore and local color tales extend beyond the humorous. In fact, these tales are very often a source for accurate and interesting history lessons. Tyler's "Pulp Job 1918–20" provides the reader with a historical look at the logging industry in the Adirondacks. Details about the J. and J. Rogers Company and its ownership of most of Whiteface Mountain might provide the Adirondack student with viable information regarding the types of companies prominent in the early twentieth century. Moreover, Tyler's story discusses the methods used to bring pulp wood to the base of the mountain, the ninety dollars a month that laborers earned, and the dangers involved in such labor, as illustrated by the workman who falls and slips to the bottom of the mountain and into the river along with the wood he was cutting (1974, 11). "Boomed In," another story by Tyler, parallels the themes of "Pulp Job 1918–20" by further discussing the pulp operations of the Adirondacks. In this story, readers are introduced to the use of a boom, a large barge to which logs are strapped for easy export on the waterways.

The more historical texts can provide students with excellent jumping-off points for their own writing. Composition students may find researching the pulp wood industry interesting. Other topics might include researching methods of labor, such as the boom, or pay scales in early Adirondack industry. The stories may also serve as fodder for researching the history of the student's own career choice.

In addition to the historical component of Adirondack folklore, many stories—especially those by Tyler—contain natural phenomena that serve to enrich the reader's spiritual life. These tales also address human limitations, as well as emotional and environmental concerns. Magic is limited and contained in real characters, not wishes or dreams. Wit and intelligence often outsmart evil. Evil does not win but is understood. Some additional themes that Tyler explores in her folktales include mysteries that surround labor. In "The Rawhide Tugs," for example, a young boy tries to transport timber to his father's shed, but cannot due to the terrain and weight of the timber. He attaches rawhide pull straps to the timber, but because the tugs are so wet, they do not work. Overnight, the boy wonders how he will explain to his father why the timber is not in the shed. When the boy wakes the next morning, he finds the timber outside the front door. According to this tall tale, once the rawhide dried out, it shrunk so forcefully that when it retracted, it pulled the timber up the hill to the shed. Mystery also shrouds "Faithful Layers," a story that may address the negative effects of taking short cuts. In this tale a farmer cuts his cost on feed for his chickens by feeding them sawdust. Since the chickens readily eat the sawdust and it has no adverse effects on egg production, he places his chickens on an all-sawdust diet. The story concludes by claiming that the chicks hatched from the sawdust-eating birds were born with wooden legs—and one of the chicks happened to be a woodpecker.

Tall tales such as "The Rawhide Tugs" and "Faithful Layers" lend themselves to a variety of possible assignments. Students may analyze the narrative voice in the tales and ask to what extent the narrator wants us to believe the stories. Students may also wish to analyze the appeal these stories have for local audiences. A student may wish to study the nature of Adirondack storytelling, since Kay Bishop and Melanie Kimball in "Engaging Students in Storytelling" assert that adults and educators, who at one time abandoned storytelling, have a renewed interest in the craft resulting from storytelling associations, festivals, and clubs (2006). Students may also analyze the symbolic and often satirical outlook such tales have on local people and on the Adirondacks in general. Does the bizarre appearance of the chicks in "Faithful Layers" suggest a deeper economic meaning? Could the story be a commentary on or criticism of taking financial shortcuts?

### Better Writing through Local Color

To help students attain a level of writing that both meets academic standards and engages the student actively in the subject material, instructors need to present material relevant to the lives of their students. Perhaps MacWilliams says it best when he says, "The empowerment [students] experience as authorities in the subject matter inevitably leads to a higher level of motivation and, in my opinion, some of the strongest writing at all levels that they do for the course" (2005, 68). We want students to be able to continue sharpening their reading and writing skills, but we need to give them reasons and the motivation to do so. Restructuring the community college curriculum to include local color stories for introductory English courses would be a huge step forward for students, but until the formal curriculum changes, professors need to assume an active role in making changes to their own reading lists.

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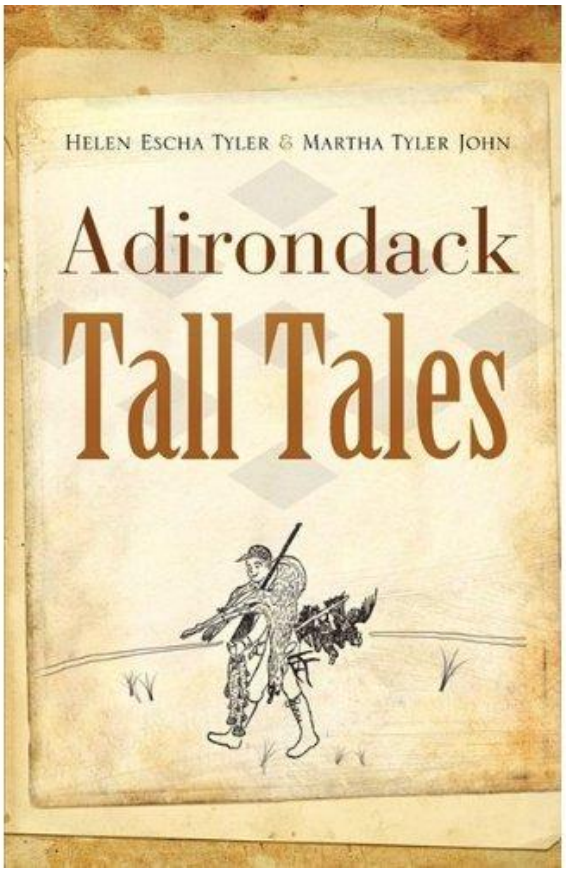
Andermatt's argument seems very reasonable, especially at an age where localisms and regional literature often succumb to the educational bias toward teaching canonical works. Students of this case study should discuss and argue the educational methodology that Andermatt proposes, and contrast it to their own experience. A rereading of item 4.6. of the Main Page on Adirondack portraits may provide some insight as to the value of regional rural identities in literature, and their potential to project tall-tale stories and myths. Are there any liabilities in adapting syllabus courses and their methodologies in accordance to college students' interests and occupations? In addition to this, students of this case study should also consider the educational power of folk literature and stories inside a more rural community as oppose to urban environments. How do these stories ideologically unify each setting? Does regional folk

literature entertain the sense of timelessness and how does this affect the insiders' perception of the community's traditions? Some critics have argued that folk literature and traditions provide a *spatial* understanding of local "cosmogony," rather than a *temporal* one. What role would nature and the immediate surroundings of a rural community play in this theory?

This item should also be used to introduce students to the characteristics of American tall tales. Serving sometimes as foundational explanations to why certain things are the way they are, and other times as anecdotes which flaunt characteristic national or regional practices and peoples for the mere sake of comicality in story-telling, tall tales have truly captured the frontier quality of the American past. By approaching the origin of tall tales, students should discuss the importance of the exaggerated actions of their plots and consider the archetypical quality of the characters that appear in them. How are American tall tales different from folk stories of other cultures? What are the historical motives behind these differences? What kinds of speech acts (or other linguistic and discursive patterns) are portrayed in the genre and why does comedy play such an essential role?



## 7.- The Significance of Forestry in American Culture

One way to engage students in discussing environmental policies and ethos is by raising the topic of conservation and preservation. In order to do so, the history of forestry in America can serve as an introductory subject which reveals the actual nebulousness between the two terms. For the sake of simplification (including in this case study), conservation and preservation are often described as precise practices: the former involves a wisely calculated exploitation of natural resources in a way that may guarantee their durability and cause as minimal an environmental impact as possible; the latter prohibits any form of human interference that may be considered as an exploitation, that is, wilderness is to remain pristine and untouched. The variables, therefore, depend upon a culture's–or a social group's–perception of wilderness and on the influence of civilization. As can be expected, the categories are not as distinct as these definitions pretend them to be. Rather, and as Terrie proposes in the interview, one ought to look at each environmental case separately so as to weigh the problem, the different measures that were proposed, and analyze the final solution that was adopted. Indeed, environmental issues reach a complexity beyond the linguistic tendencies to create categories, and often conservationism and preservation overlap. Ethics have also become an indispensable factor in the mix, and moral evaluations of history, human conduct, human needs, and man's place within nature afford additional difficulties too abstract for reductive categories. Some writers deem ethics as the necessary starting point from which to asses environmental issues. Animal liberationist Peter Singer, for example, has in the last years turned ethics from subjective interpretations to objectivity through methods of quantification in his writing (see Works Cited).

For this exercise, students are asked to examine the history of forestry in America in order to grasp the complicated factors that may render the categories of conservation and preservation as vague. In *Forever Wild*, Terrie explains how the approval of the "forever wild" clause came as a reaction to the general distrust against loggers and state legislation and placed faith upon scientific forestry. Terrie argues that in a way, the constitutional provision was almost accidental because it was generally conceived as a temporary measure reacting against the continual harvest of timber after the 1885 law that protected Adirondack lands. The preservation of the forests was not what the people sought; what they wanted was a more controlled management of the resources, a power that would be bestowed upon the expertise of scientists, not upon the state and the lumber industry:

> Many people hoped that the professional forester, trained in the nascent science of silviculture, would replace the ruthless lumberman and thus provide New York with the opportunity to preserve its watershed and yet continue to exploit its timber resources. Few people wished to eliminate lumbering altogether from the Adirondacks or even from the Forest Preserve, once it was created. (1985: 99)

For the most part, absolute preservation was deemed as a waste by the people as much as it was by politicians and scientists, and yet, David McClure's proposition to include the protection of the timber in 1894 was approved. The sentiment was that until the state and the Forestry Commission could be trusted to manage the resources properly, the forests should remain untouched. Although the people were demanding adequate forestry, Article VII, Section 7 of the New York Constitution exposed the weakness of scientists because "it testified to the failure of professional foresters to persuade the

representatives of the public . . . that new techniques in forestry could protect the watershed of the Adirondacks" (Terrie 1985: 108).

This paradoxical event by which citizens resolved to adopt preservationist measures in spite of their preference for conservation and utilitarianism is a unique chapter of Adirondack history that attests to the emergence of forestry as a science in the American context. George Perkins Marsh, who studied in Europe and published *Man and Nature* in 1864, is credited with bringing forestry to the forefront of environmental management, and as we have seen, was highly influential on Verplanck Colvin, who as well displayed an inclination toward utilitarianism. Two other figures are crucial for a more global appreciation of the initiative of forestry: John Muir and Gifford Pinchot. Students should research the relationship between the two men; how it began as a master-disciple bond but was fractured when Pinchot deviated away from more preservationist convictions and confirmed utilitarianism as the greater good (Pinchot was, in fact, drastically antipathetic against McClure's proposition). Through an understanding of how the relationship between Pinchot and Muir evolved, students should evaluate whether or not purely preservationist stances existed at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, and compare the struggle for Hetch Hetchy with the conservation and preservation history of the Adirondacks. A recommended reading is Char Miller's "A Sylvan Prospect" (see Works Cited).

In addition to this, students should discuss how, despite the fact that Article VII, Section 7, was created out of a paradox, the "forever wild" clause has reached a new meaning for New Yorkers, one based on symbolism and mystification. Although future conservationist ends were what citizens strove for, today many think that "the value of the Adirondacks lies mostly in its intrinsic value, not in its use-values" (Ouderkirk, 28). To identify the Adirondacks with the sole phrase of being the "forever wild" land may be misleading in terms of how it was that it became such: it was not born out of idealism or preservationist endeavors, but out of the need to exploit the forests efficiently. One is tempted to tautologically define the Adirondacks as forever wild, and the avoidance (or ignorance) of accurate historical detail is precisely the breeding ground for myth. Students should select one of the twentieth-century writers mentioned in the last item of the Main Page and examine how the concept of "forever wild" is used in his work, whether directly or indirectly, and consider whether it has or has not reached mythical proportions.

### 8.- Perspectives on the Adirondack Park Agency and the Models of Planning

Neal Burdick and Philip Terrie both addressed the impact of the Adirondack Park Agency in their respective interviews as one of the turning points in Adirondack history (reread item 3.4. of the Main Page to review how the Agency was created and what its objectives were). When the current governor, Nelson Rockefeller, appointed Harold Hochschild chairman of the Temporary Study Commission, the most pressing issue was the consideration of ways to ensure that the development of private lands was appropriate and consistent with the long-range well-being of the park. In 1970 the commission presented the report, with a total of 181 recommendations on the management of private and state lands, the first of which was the creation of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). A year later, the APA was officially established. In

1972 it presented the State Land Master Plan and in 1973 it submitted the Private Land Use and Development Plan (Adirondack Park Use and Development Plan).

The State Land Master Plan answered to the premise that "human use of public lands is to be encouraged as long as physical and biological resources, and social or psychological attributes, are not degraded" (Porter and Whaley, 233). The lands were assorted into categories according to their physical and biological features and to the extent that human sustentation could be managed: wilderness; primitive; canoe; wild forest; wild, scenic, and recreational rivers; intensive use; historic; state administrative; and travel corridors.

The Adirondack Park Use and Development Plan, meanwhile, established six categories where private lands were to be classified: resource management; rural use; low intensity use; moderate intensity use; industrial use; and hamlet. Jon D. Erikson describes the plan as follows:

> The Private Land Use and Development Plan . . . set forth a comprehensive system of developing zoning based, in principle, on a system of natural resource, historical, and site development considerations. The capacity of land to withstand development and the impact of development on watershed, viewshed, wildlife, and recreational goals, were central to the drafting of this Use Plan. (26)

The image at the end of this item shows the subdivision of lands as a result of the State Land Master Plan and the Adirondack Park Use and Development Plan in 1999. Students should as well access the 2009 map available in the website, where the divisions can be visualized in detail (see Links to Online Sources).

The Private Land Use and Development Plan, in particular, did not sit well with locals, and for decades the APA became the focal point of controversy, which, as Philip Terrie mentions in his interview, still continues today. Recall as well that Neal Burdick stated that "there's a lot of ongoing enmity about a State body telling people how they can use their land." Indeed, the Private Land Use and Development Plan in many ways resuscitated the old feud between the powerful and influential elite (the Temporary Study Commission was, after, all, chaired by a millionaire and counted wealthy landowners, industrialists, and lawyers among its members) and the locals making a living inside the Park. As Terrie describes:

> Opposition to the Private Land Plan came mostly from Adirondack residents and their representatives. Year-round residents believed that their interests had been ignored by both the Temporary Study Commission and the Park Agency, which, in their view, were dominated by downstate conservationists who valued a narrowly defined nature more than the livelihoods of the people who lived and worked year-round in the Park. The Private Land Plan was seen as an unnecessary imposition on of bureaucratic red tape in local affairs, an assault on the local business climate, and an unconstitutional abridgement of property rights. (2008: 168-169)

But not all residents opposed the APA's resolutions and methods. For one thing, they saw that the APA could ensure the wilderness quality of the region, and that private lands did need to be in controlled by the state to a reasonable extent. Not long after the submission of the plans, Anne LaBastille, for example, subverts the popular understanding of the controversy as a fight between the elite and locals by claiming that

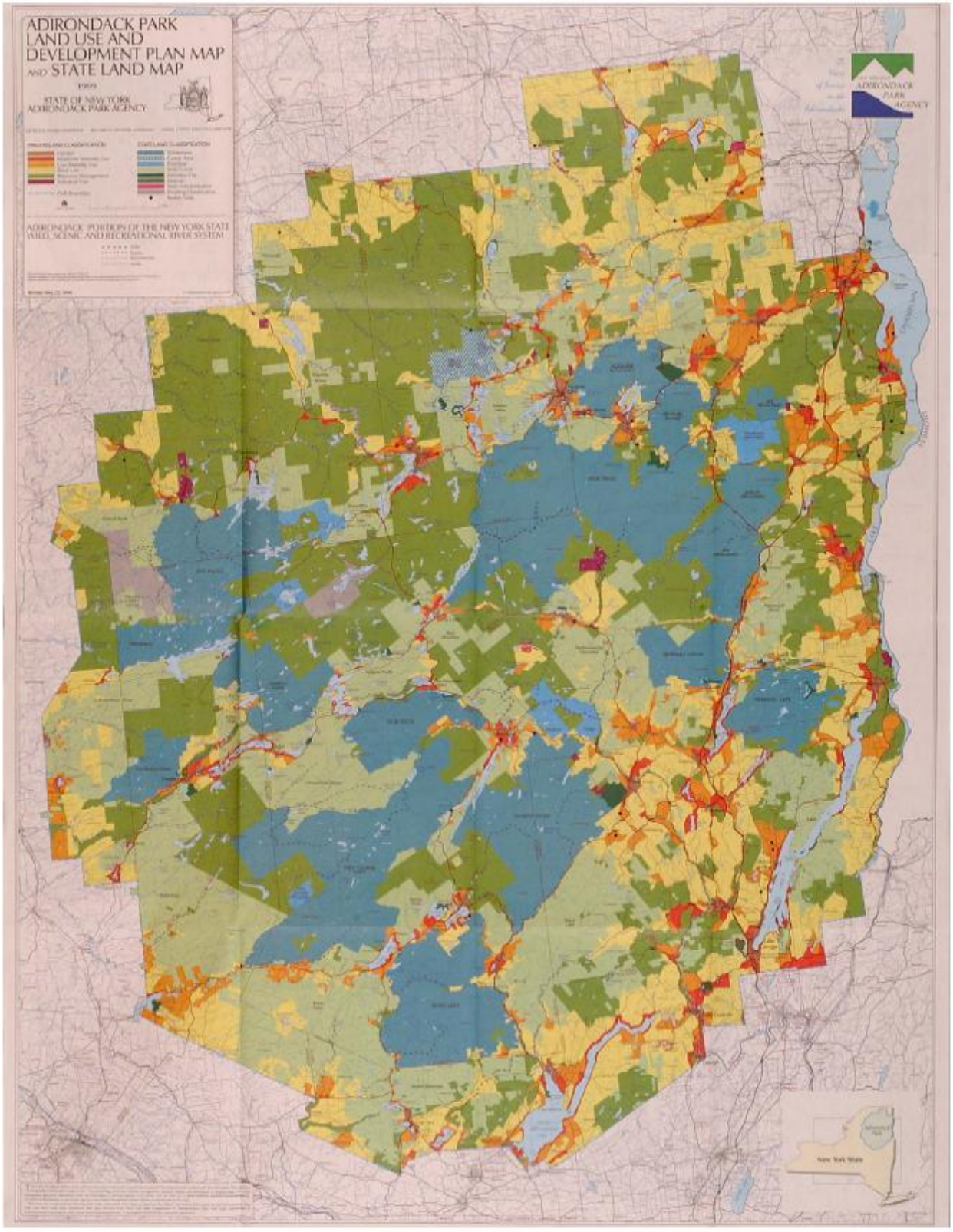
the APA's labor must be interpreted as a guarantee of protection of the wilderness. The following is an excerpt from *Woodswoman* (first published in 1976):

> There had been the *first* crisis of lumbering and wildfires in the 1880s. *Then* the Adirondacks had been saved by creating the Forest Preserve out of state-owned lands, and by adding the "forever wild" amendment to the constitution to protect timber and watersheds. Then, as now, many people felt, "Those wealthy outsiders are trying to lock up the land and limit the lumbering."
>
> The *second* crisis was the tourism and recreation industry. With over 9 million visitors a year, many with money, mobility, and leisure, the second-home craze had hit hard. Land prices had been rocketing. Developers had been buying huge chunks of land for speculation, commercial centers, or housing subdivisions. At this moment, five such major developers wanted to involve 72,000 acres of mountain land. One alone planned for a small, septic-tank city of 30,000 people!
>
> It seemed to me that this was like the proverbial snake swallowing its own tail. Second-home owners demand more roads, better maintenance, increased police, fire, and medical services, even new municipal buildings. Yet, these same people are here only during the summer months and perhaps a weekend or two in winter. They leave lots and camps empty for most of the year. The cost of local government goes up, and there's still a lot of unemployment in the winter.
>
> The solution to this second crisis was the creation of the Adirondack Park Agency . . . The main purpose of the [State Land and Land Use and Development] plans is to protect the parklike atmosphere of the Adirondacks and still consider the well-being of its residents.
>
> The *third* crisis, as I saw it, was the public's reaction to this "second saving of the Adirondacks." For the most part natives fear the impact of the new controls, while outsiders welcome them. It truly is a "collision in the wilderness."
>
> One morning, as a waitress poured my coffee, she mourned, "A few retired, wealthy outsiders will get all the advantages from this agency. The park will end up as their natural history museum and playground." Her words (spoken seventy years after the first crisis) had a familiar ring. (240-241)

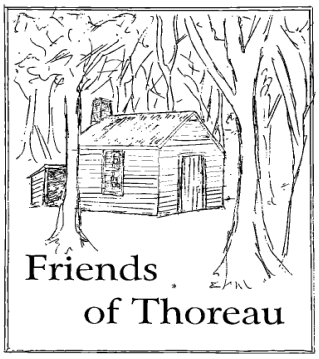
In spite of the general opinion held by residents, LaBastille is firm on her support to the APA: "I'd chosen to build my home and live close to the wilderness where nature would provide a perpetuity to life. If the Adirondack Park Agency could provide the special security to ensure that, then God bless it" (242).

Students should engage in the discussion of the possible advantages and disadvantages stemming from the State Land Master Plan and the Private Land Use and Development Plan. The debate should not only take into consideration precise examples for which the intervention of a body such as the APA may be necessary or unnecessary, but should also regard the solid, historical value of private property in the form of lands for American culture (an idea that has been expressed in several items of this case study).

Students should also compare the land plans of the Adirondacks with that of the neighboring state of Vermont through a quick reading of the case study *Landscape Protection Policies: The Case of Vermont*, by Ana Recarte Vicente-Arche and Enrique Alonso, from the Friends of Thoreau Program of the Benjamin Franklin Institute (see Links to Online Sources). Item 9, "The Role of Planning: What is Missing in Vermont's Landscape Policy? The Initial Failure and the Subsequent Amendment of Act 250" offers enough information on the "problems" that the lack of state-wide planning produce (pages 55 to 62).




*Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map and State Land Map (1999),*
*Courtesy of the Adirondack Park NY State Agency*




# Adirondack Writing and the Wilderness Aesthetic

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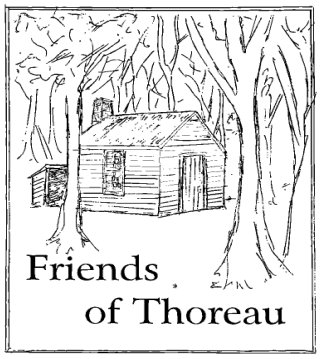
*Blue Mountain Lake as seen from the Adirondack Museum.*




# Adirondack Writing and the Wilderness Aesthetic

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## LINKS TO ONLINE SOURCES

Adirondack Almanack Website. Culture, Politics, History, and the Environment: http://www.adirondackalmanack.com/

Adirondack Park website by Greg Smith: http://www.adirondack-park.net

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation: The Adirondack Forest Preserve: http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5263.html

Adirondack Park Agency Website (Main Page): http://www.apa.state.ny.us/

The Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan and State Land Master Plan Map from 2009 can be downloaded and visualized from:
http://www.apa.state.ny.us/gis/FacsimileMap.html

To download and visualize other maps by the APA:
http://www.apa.state.ny.us/gis/index.html

The Geology of New York: A Simplified Account of the New York State Geological Survey: http://gretchen.geo.rpi.edu/roecker/nys/adir_txt.html

The New York State Geological Survey: http://nygeosurvey.geology-forum.com/

Verplanck Colvin's articles in Harper's Magazine:
http://www.harpers.org/subjects/VerplanckColvin

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA): http://www.apa.state.ny.us/index.html

PBS Documentary *The Adirondacks*: http://www.pbs.org/theadirondacks/
(Parts of the documentary may be viewed at www.youtube.com)

Adirondack Park Visitor Interpretive Centers: http://www.adkvic.org/

The Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake: http://www.adkmuseum.org/

The Wild Center, the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks in Tupper Lake:
http://www.wildcenter.org/

The Adirondack Mountain Club: http://www.adk.org/home-flash.aspx

The Adirondack Center for Writing: http://www.adirondackcenterforwriting.org/

Adirondack Mountains Writers and Literature:
http://www.adkmountains.com/adk_lit.asp

*Blueline*, a Literary Magazine Dedicated to the Spirit of the Adirondacks:
http://www2.potsdam.edu/blueline/blue.html

*Adirondack Life Magazine*: http://www.adirondacklife.com/

*Adirondack Explorer*, a newsmagazine devoted to the protection and enjoyment of the Adirondack Park: http://www.adirondackexplorer.org/

*The Adirondack Review*: http://www.pw.org/content/adirondack_review_1

*Adirondack History Journal* (with links to Environmental Organizations, History, and other sites of interest, as well as maps and photos): http://www.masterpieces.com/

North Country Public Radio provides excerpts of Adirondack writers reading their pieces at: http://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/livingnc.html

New York State Library: http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/index.html

William West Durant and Adirondack Great Camps:
http://www.sthubertsisle.com/page169.html

Great Camp Sagamore: http://www.greatcampsagamore.org/

Paul Smith's College: http://www.paulsmiths.edu/

Adirondack Memories: "The Lament of Philosopher's Camp" by Jon Kopp:
http://tupperlake.net/philosophers_lament.htm

Cooper's Cave at Glens Falls: http://www.sgfny.com/Coopers-Cave.htm

On Tall Tales in general: http://42explore.com/talltale.htm.
See also: http://www.americanfolklore.net/tt.html

*Voices*, The Journal of New York Folklore:
http://www.nyfolklore.org/pubs/voic33-3-4/voic33-3-4.html

Trudeau Institute: http://www.trudeauinstitute.org/

Historic Saranac Lake on Facebook:
http://www.facebook.com/pages/Historic-Saranac-Lake/241312283150?v=wall

The Robert Louis Stevenson Memorial Cottage and Museum:
http://www.n3carts.org/Stevenson/main.html

Adirondacks.com and Stevenson Society of America Inc.
http://www.upperstregis.com/robertlstevenson.html

On the Legend of Ticonderoga and the story of Major Duncan Campbell:
http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~dagjones/captdavidperry/ty2/

Information on Fred Rice and on "Fifty Years in a Health Resort":
http://www.hsl.wikispot.org/Fred_M._Rice

Bill McKibben's Official Website: http://www.billmckibben.com/

Winslow Homer in the National Gallery of Arts:
http://www.nga.gov/feature/homer/homersplash.htm

Winslow Homer in Artcyclopedia:
http://www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/homer_winslow.html

The Worcester Art Museum: http://www.worcesterart.org/

John Brown Farm: http://nysparks.state.ny.us/historic-sites/29/details.aspx

Charlotte, The Vermont Whale, An Electronic Museum. Project of the University of Vermont. Directed by Jeff Howe: http://www.uvm.edu/whale//

Lake Champlain Basin Program: http://www.lcbp.org/

Old Forge Library: http://www.oldforgelibrary.org/

The Nature Conservancy in the Adirondacks: http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/newyork/preserves/art13582.html

Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks: http://www.protectadks.org/data/

The Adirondack Moose Center: http://www.snowyinn.com/page3.htm

Northeast Ecological Recovery Society on the Restoration of Timber Wolves in the Adirondacks: http://www.adirondackwolf.org/

The International Wolf Center: http://www.wolf.org

The Conservation Biological Institute on the restoration of wolves in the Adirondacks: http://consbio.org/what-we-do/wolf-reintroduction-feasibility-in-the-adirondack/?searchterm=wolf
Full report can be downloaded at:
http://consbio.org/what-we-do/wolf-reintroduction-feasibility-in-the-adirondack

> The Conservation Biology Institute(CBI) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) founded in 1997 in Corvallis, Oregon. It was chosen by the Adirondack Citizens Advisory Committee organized by Defenders of Wildlife (http://www.defenders.org/) to examine the question of biological feasibility of reintroducing gray wolves back to the Adirondacks. By applying what is known about gray wolf ecology (in general) to the best available spatial and genetics data for the Adirondacks, we examined three basic questions:
>
> - Is there suitable gray wolf habitat in the Adirondacks to support a viable population?
> - Is there adequate landscape connectivity both within the Adirondacks and between the Adirondacks and the surrounding region to allow for reasonable gray wolf movement important to their persistence?
> - What does the most recent genetics tell us about wolves in the Adirondacks?
>
> The Report "Wolf Reintroduction Feasibility in the Adirondack Park" was produced in October 1999 by Paul C. Paquet, Ph.D., James R. Strittholt, Ph.D., and Nancy L. Staus, M.S.

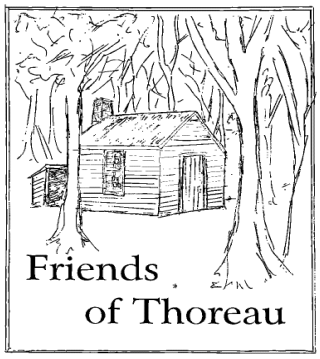
Adirondack 46-ers Website: http://www.adk46r.org/

Adirondack Journey: http://www.adirondackjourney.com/

Adirondackwood.com, Directory of New York's Adirondack-based wood product manufacturing companies and the wood products they produce: www.adirondackwood.com/images/nys_adk.png

The Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI): http://www.rpi.edu/dept/ees/

Case study "Landscape Protection Policies: The Case of Vermont," by Ana Recarte Vicente-Arche and Enrique Alonso García. (July 2009) can be downloaded from the web page of the program at the Benjamin Franklin Institute: http://www.institutofranklin.net/en/investigacion/lineas-de-investigacion/-friends-thoreau-program-environmentalism-and-nature-conservation-north-america/case-studi

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Ray Brook, NY 12977

Thanks to AdirondackWood.com for permission to publish map of upstate New York available on their website.

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