

Adirondack League Club Early History

Transcribed in 2009 by Town of Webb Historian Peg Masters

News Notes

1875 – Utica, ca. March 18, 1875.

“Jay Linfield of Rome has gone to the North Woods to superintend the putting up of buildings for the Bisby Club on the first Bisby Lake.”

1878 – Utica Morning Herald, “*The Bisby Club*,” October 11, 1878.

“A little pamphlet before us contains the constitution, officers and regulations of the ‘Bisby Club,’ organized under chapter 267 of the laws of the State of New York for 1875 . . . The Bisby Club takes its name from the range of lakes between the head streams of the Moose and Black rivers in Herkimer county. The club holds some seven thousand acres of land and water, which includes these celebrated lakes and tributaries.”

1880 – Utica Morning Herald & Daily Gazette, “*Rome Matters*,” March 4, 1880.

“The Bisby club, composed mostly of residents of Utica, Syracuse and New York, hold lease from the State of some 8,000 acres in the North Woods, including Woodhull, three Bisby and three or four other lakes and a portion of the Moose river. The headquarters of the club are at the first Bisby Lake, where it has a lodge which cost about \$1,000. Several cottages will be put up this summer and a hatchery built. One of the new cottages will be for Vice President Roby. An addition to the lodge will also be put on for General R. U. Sherman. Two wagon loads of building materials left Rome for the lodge today. Jay Linkfield of this city goes up tomorrow to take charge of the grounds and superintend the improvements. Mr. Linkfield is quite familiar with that portion of the woods and in all respects, competent to look after the interest of the club. Norman G. Orcott goes as his assistant.”
Note: Jay Linkfield of Camden, NY died Nov. 9, 1888 at the age of 51.

1883 – Watertown Daily Times, “*Personal*,” August 16, 1883, p. 7.

“Governor Cleveland has been invited by the Bisby club to take ‘pot-luck’ with it for a short time during his stay in the wilderness. He is assured that the club will not lionize him and that he is expected to appear in his flannel shirt and army shoes.”

1886 – Utica Weekly Herald, “*Rod and Gun*,” November 9, 1886, p. 12.

“Black bears are unusually numerous in the Adirondack region this fall. Charles A. Nicholson of Utica, W. S. Wicks of Trenton and Howard Brown of Brookline, Mass. are about to erect a handsome and commodious log camp at Big Rock Bay, Jock’s Lake. A. D. Barber, Jr., of this city has erected the frame for his new hotel on Jock’s Lake in the North Woods. The building will be 40x60 feet in size. Mr. Barber and his guests have killed 27 deer at and near the lake this fall.”

1888 – Utica Weekly Herald, “*Rod and Gun*,” February 14, 1888, p. 7.

“The annual meeting of the Bisby club was held at the office of Cookingham & Sherman in the Mayo building Tuesday at 10 A. M. The members present were: General R. U. Sherman, H. Lee Babcock, New Hartford; H. J. Cookingham, T. R. Proctor, O. J. Childs, Utica; W. H. Boardman, New York; R. R. Spaulding, Syracuse; O. Reby, W. Crimsford, Mass.; E. S. Sterns, Wallingford, Ct.; W. H. H. Wooster, Seymour, Ct. Samuel L. Bryant of Wallingford, Ct., was admitted to membership. The club now has 25 members, which is the number to which its by-laws limit it.”

“The trustees remained in session most of the afternoon formulating rules for the government of the lodge for the season and revising the scale of prices to be charged. The trustees also decided to increase the size of the present dining room, to provide a new dining room for the guides, and new sleeping compartments for the lodge keeper. Adjourned.”

1890 – New York Times, “*Bisby Club’s Resort*,” June 8, 1890, p. 12.

“. . . One of the chief charms of the Bisby Club is the game-law proviso. The club sails closer to the policy of game in the Adirondacks than any law itself. The widow of any deceased member may on payment of current assessments enjoy the same privileges as if she were a member. The privileges of the lodge, which was built in 1879, grounds, boats, and franchise of the club are open to all members. Every member who resides at the lodge, which accommodates seventy-five persons, is allowed to invite three guests over and above his family; and one of the beauties of this unique Summer settlement is that everybody is supposed under club regulations to be in bed by 10 o’clock.”

“. . . We were off on buckboards to cover the eleven miles between White Lake corners and Woodhull Lake. And such a ride! For over two weeks continuously the rain had fallen in the woods. The rivers were swollen beyond their capacity, the lakes had overflowed, the roads were impassable, being cut here and blocked there by the windfalls which occurred with diurnal regularity. It took over four hours by the watch to cover eleven miles. Every man in the party was stiff and every other one was sore and well nigh maimed from the jolting he received.”

“It is a four mile from down Woodhull. Everything destined to Bisby travels this way, from the tourist to the ham which the club’s caterer, Henry Studor, purchases at Booneville. It is an hour’s stiff row from the Woodhull dam, controlled by the State, to the Woodhull boathouse, owned by the Bisby Club. It is a half an hour’s walk over the carry, which is pronounced the best in the woods, from Woodhull to Bisby. It is true that Gen. Husted’s son Tom and young Pell, who was shot last Summer by young Ellis H. Roberts, who mistook Pell for a deer at twenty-five paces, covered the distance in 17 minutes, but this feat is not to be thought of on a hot day, except by youngsters who possess more energy than judgment.”

“Here stands Bisby Lodge, a pretentious log house, which for years has borne the enviable reputation of furnishing the best cooking in the woods. Gen. Husted’s cottage, the ‘Eagle’s Nest,’ on ‘Speaker’s Point’ is half a mile across the lake. It is three stories in height. It occupies a commanding position—the best on the lake. It is a log house with three rooms on the first floor—two bedrooms and a drawing room; four bedrooms on the second floor, and Mrs. Husted’s boudoir on the third floor. It is filled with odd and quaint curiosities of the forest.”

“The General was fortunate in discovering at Forestport, a small town two miles and a half from White Lake Corners, a mechanical carpentering genius named Evans, a Welshman, who has utilized his odd moments by searching the forests and waters of the lake for eccentric specimens of nature. He has given the General a parquette flooring in the drawing room which cannot be seen outside of the big cities of the state, so perfect and artistic it is. The walls are composed of ash laid in angles. The

newel post was manufactured out of a log of white cherry which lay in the lake for some twenty years, from which the General's sons last Summer dangled their lines for fish, and which in its solidity, beauty, and artistic finish, would be regarded as a work of high art in any house in New York City. Its top is decorated by a wart from a maple tree which appears in its smallest detail as a French bonnet of the latest design."

"Bisby is the third highest lake in the Adirondacks; 2050 feet above tidewater, and naturally every member of the club is proud of it. The trout season opens with a mountain ash cocktail, a relic of the old Walton Club manufactured by Gen. Sherman, and is continued daily from May 15 to June 15, when the lodge and Gen. Husted's cottage are left in their loneliness until the middle of July, when the family season begins. This is the sandwich period, for usually the beginning of and the end of the season is marked by stag parties. It is at these times that Gen. Husted is in his element. He brings to the cottage half a dozen chosen friends and the choicest wines, ranging from Maderia of 1828, Anitgua rum of 1825, Prince of Wales port and Blue Grass bait, whose date has been obliterated with dust, and, which he does no fishing himself, he invariably succeeds in sending to his old friend, Chauncey M. Depew, a box of the finest fish caught in the lakes."

1890 – Rome Semi-Weekly Citizen, "*The North Woods*," July 12, 1890.

"One of the largest deals in the way of an Adirondack preserve is that recently consummated by the organization of the Adirondack League Club, which has bought the Anson Blake tract of about 100,000 acres. It includes nearly all of Jock's Lake, the upper end only being outside the tract. The preserve lies in both Hamilton and Herkimer counties. It is covered with an unbroken growth of valuable timber. The present owners of the tract are to convey it to the club for about \$500,000 and it has been on the market for \$1.25 an acre. The five hundred shares are to be sold to the members of the company for \$1,000 a share."

"An effort is being made to extend the Herkimer, Newport & Poland railroad into the preserve and make it standard gauge. Recently the agents of the league posted notices throughout the preserve warning against trespassing. The read as follows:"

"Notice. All persons not members of the Adirondack League Club are hereby forbidden to hunt, fish, or trespass upon these lands, or any lands forming part of the tract known as the Anson Blake tract. All persons not members of the said club found hunting, fishing or trespassing on said premises will be prosecuted according to law." Adirondack League Club, O. L. Snyder, Secretary.

"It is believed every share of the originators of the scheme dispose of over 200 will be clear gain. The certificate of incorporation, which was filed in the office of the county clerk of New York county June 18, names the following trustees: Mills W. Barse, Ole L. Snyder, Warner Miller, Mark (Brick) M. Pomeroy, Robert C. Alexander, Henry C. Squires, Warren Higley, Henry Patten, Abraham G. Mills, DeWitt C. Lefevre, and Alexander R. Harper."

1890 – Watertown Times, "*To Save The Great Forests*," September 4, 1890, p. 2.

"The history of the project of saving the Adirondack forests is exceedingly interesting. With that object in view, the Adirondack Park Association was quietly formed in New York City in April last. . . . This association came into being because of the sealed conviction that the forestry commission has proved a failure, says the New York Press; that it has suffered inroads to be made into the heart of the Adirondacks, which has effected serious injury and threatened still greater; that it has promoted no serious measures to promote the planting of trees; that it has not properly resisted the encroachments of shingle men and charcoal burners; that it had allowed the encroachment of railroads; that in fact the commission was a useless body. Filled with views of

this character and instinct that the ‘*groves were of God’s first temple,*’ Dr. Martin Burke resolved to take up the cause of preservation of this glorious expanse of forest and stream and to save to the state the primitive headquarters of the Hudson river, at least.” Among the executive committee of the association were: Dr. Burke, Dr. Alfred Loomis, John Cladin, Charles E. Coon, Edward Lauterbach, chairman, Chauncey M. Depew, Thomas C. Platt, William H. Murtha, Darwin R. James, James J. Belden, Edward F. Jones, W. L. Strong, William R. Grace, Warner Miller, Arthur S. Hamilton, C. C. Shayne, Warren Higley, H. H. Warner, Roswell P. Floer, Thomas F. Gilroy, Robert Lenox Banks, William E. Beach, William R. Weed, C. W. Hackett, Samuel A. Beardsley, A. S. Draper, Maurice J. Power, S. V. R. Cruger, Geo. H. Sharpe, E. L. Trudeau, Samuel O. Gleason, & Amasa Thornton.”

1892 – Utica Morning Herald, “*Personal,*” March 25, 1892, p. 6.

“Architect W. S. Wicks of Buffalo has returned from Little Moose lake, where he has been locating a new club house for the Adirondack league club, to cost from \$15,000 to \$20,000.”

1892 – Boonville Herald, “*Adirondack Echos,*” April 28, 1892, p. 5.

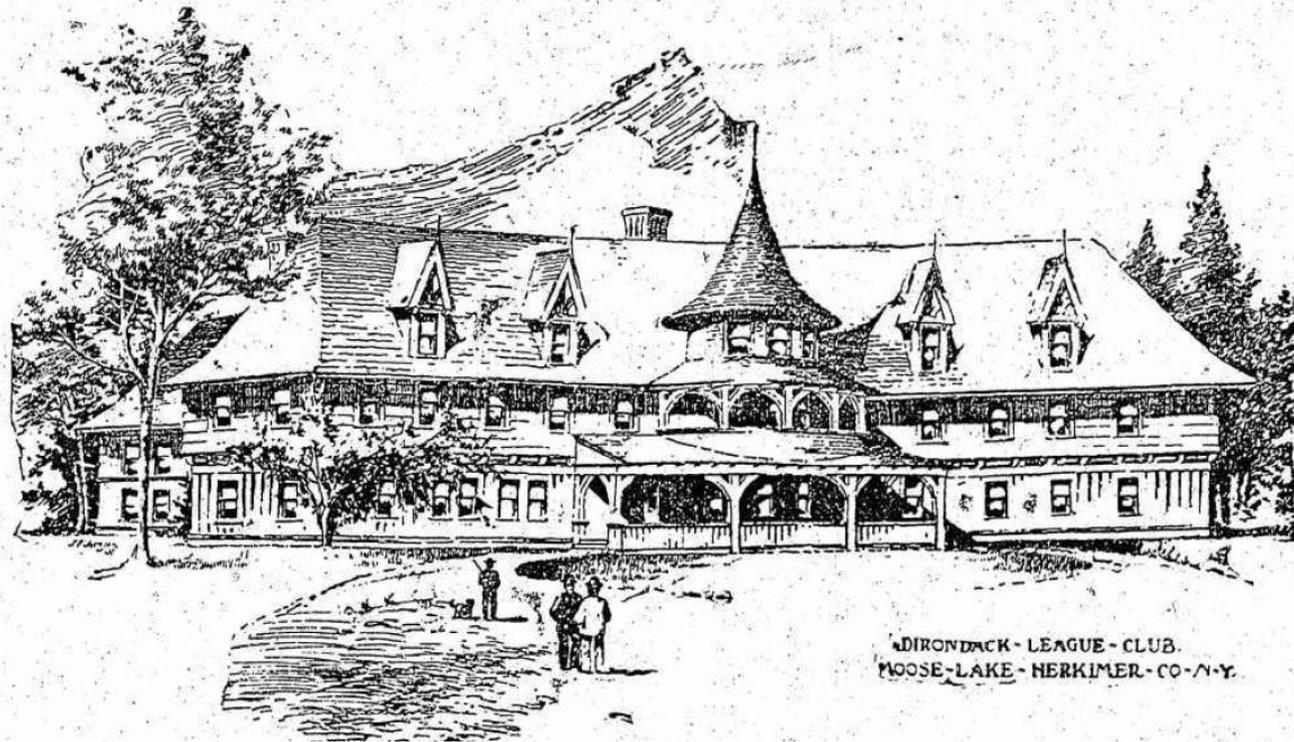
“A steamboat will be placed on Honnedaga Lake this season which, will be found a great accommodation to tourists. . . A. D. Barber Jr. has just returned from his trip to California and is now at Forest lodge, on Honnedaga lake, getting ready for the fishing season.”

“Many deer are being seen in this locality this spring. . . It is thought the building of the Adirondack railroad is driving them from their accustomed haunts.”

“There is every prospect for a big business on the lakes this season and considerable building is anticipated in addition to the large club house now being put up on Little Moose lake. The contractor, P. P. Sanders, has quite a force of men engaged in getting the club house started and building accommodations for the workers. The work on the club house will be pushed forward with all possible speed. George B. Birdsall of Trenton left yesterday for Little Moose lake to assist in the work.”

1893 – Syracuse Sunday Herald, “*Adirondack League Club*” – from the NY Mail and Express, January 8, 1893, p. 2.

“The Adirondack League Club has just completed negotiation by which it accrues absolute title to the club house ‘Forest Lodge’ on Honnedaga or Jock’s Lake in Herkimer County together with all the buildings and, furniture, boats, camps, and other equipment formerly owned by A. D. Barber. . . . The club has two handsome and perfectly equipped club homes on its preserve, the new house on Little Moose Lake having been just completed at a cost of nearly \$30,000. . . Capt. H. G. Otis, a West Pointer and thorough caterer and manager, has been engaged as steward of the Mountain Lodge, as it is called. . . in number and distinction of its members are about two hundred, the names of seventeen of whom were found on the Tribune’s recent list of American millionaires. Nine more are Presbyterian D. D’s, and twelve more are women. . . . The club has its office in the new Mail and Express building.”



Sketch from the Syracuse Sunday Herald, “*Adirondack League Club*,” January 8, 1893, p. 2.

1893 – New York Tribune, “*Adirondack League Clubhouse*,” February 19, 1893, p. 22.

“The new clubhouse of the Adirondack League Club on Little Moose Lake, Herkimer County, N. Y., has been finished at a cost of over \$25,000. . . The clubhouse will accommodate over 100 people and is tastefully as well as substantially constructed. The pride of the architect is the great hall in the centre of the building, 50x35 feet, at one end of which is a huge fireplace capable of burning logs six feet in length. At the other end, or southern extremity of the preserve, twenty-five miles away from Mountain Lodge, is Forest Lodge, the club’s other house on Honnedaga Lake . . . and accommodates about seventy-five people. Honnedaga, or ‘Jock’s’ Lake, is six miles long. . . . Honnedaga is the Indian name of the lake signifying ‘clear water.’ On many old maps it is simply designated ‘Transparent Lake.’

The preserve of the Adirondack League Club is a vast tract in Hamilton and Herkimer counties, containing about 175,000 acres—an area eight times as large as Manhattan Island and much larger than Staten Island. . . . It is practically a virgin forest, magnificently wooded, the merchantable timber being worth alone, on the stump, according to the estimate Professor Fernow of the United States Forestry Bureau, over \$1,000,000. The club derives a revenue of \$30,000 a year from the removal of the spruce above twelve inches in diameter.

The finest hunting and fishing in the North Woods are found inside the club's boundaries, the game being carefully protected and the fish each year propagated from the club hatchery on Honnedaga Lake. There are at least twenty-five good sized lakes upon the preserve, besides the celebrated streams, the West Canada Cree, Indian River, and south branch of the Moose River. There are 500 membership shares in the Adirondack League of which all but about sixty are taken. Many of the members hold more than one share each, so that there are only 200 members. Each membership entitles the holder to one five-hundredth interest in all the club's real estate and property, the right to hunt and fish upon the entire preserve, the use of the clubhouses and facilities in addition a grant in fee of a five acre plot, with 200 feet of waterfront for a private camp or cottage. Many of these cottages have already been built on Honnedaga or Moose lakes where the private holdings have mostly been taken. The shares, originally \$1,000 each are now sold for \$1,200 each."

1893 – Boonville Herald, "Adirondack Clubs Consolidate," May 25, 1893.

"A deed has been recorded in the clerk's office of Herkimer county, the effect of which is to unite the oldest of the Adirondack sporting clubs with the largest and most extensive and important of all the corporate of Adirondack preserves. The deed is signed by Gen. Richard U. Sherman of New Hartford, as president of the Bisby club, and conveys all the property of that club, real and personal to its neighbor, the Adirondack League club. . . the Adirondack League club now has a chain of club houses extending 25 miles thro' its vast preserve of nearly 200,000 acres. The Bisby club was organized 15 years ago, and was the pioneer of the many sporting clubs which now dot the Adirondacks with their preserves."

1893 – New York Tribune, "*Gossip in the Club World*," Sunday, June 4, 1893, p. 2.



Pres. A. G. Mills

"On Tuesday evening next will be held the formal opening and housewarming of the new clubhouse of the Adirondack League Club on Little Moose Lake in Herkimer County. Mountain Lodge, as it is called, to distinguish it from the other lodges of the club, has recently been completed at a cost of \$30,000, and is probably the most comfortable, attractive and best equipped clubhouse in the Adirondacks. A club dinner is to be given on Tuesday evening, after which speeches and congratulations will be in order, while on the broad piazzas lighted up by the enormous campfire between the clubhouse and the lake, members will regale each other with impossible tales of their hunting and fishing experiences. A special train will leave Grand Central Station tomorrow evening for Fulton Chain . . . five miles distant."

1895 – Rome Semi-Weekly Citizen, "*He Missed A Shot*," August 27, 1895, p. 5.

"Old Forge, Aug. 26th.—There hangs in Dodd's Camp a handsome young buck weighing 150 pounds, which was shot in First Lake at 10 o'clock Saturday night by Mr. Tibbett, Gen. Harrison's private secretary. The deer was floating in the lake where Dr. Nicolls shot a yearling last Wednesday night. . . The Rev. John R. Paxton of New York conducted services in the Adirondack League club parlor yesterday morning. Gen. Harrison and all of his family were present and took part in the services. Gen. Harrison was the most attentive listeners at the services."

Partial Listing of 1893 Adirondack League Club Members
(from news clippings above)

A. G. Mills, Robert C. Alexander, Judge Warren Higley, Henry E. Howland, Stanford White, Gen. G. H. McKibbin, Norton P. Otis, William D. Baldwin, Edward S. Renwich, George H. Ripley, John A. Rutherford, Elliott F. Shepard, Dr. Hugh M. Smith, Arthur W. Soper, J. Walter Spanning, Dr. Lucien C. Warner, R. F. Westcott, John N. A. Griswold, George S. Graves, William P. Hull, Peter A. Hegeman, Theodore M. Barnes, Thomas J. Davis, David Wolfe Bishop, William H. Boardman, Edmund Coffin Jr., William G. De Witt, E. D. Griswold, Henry S. Harper, Mark M. Pomeroy, Henry C. Squires, George A. Strong, William H. Hinchman, Rev. John R. Paxton, John H. Starin, William Brookfield, William Z. Larned, George W. Dillinghaus (or Dillingham), Rev. Dr. Charles A. Stoddard, Dr. C. N. Hoadland, Gen. Samuel Thomas, John T. Lockman, John M. Toncey, Walter S. Logan, Rev. George Alexander, John C. Bliss, William Irvin, Philip Schaff, Spencer Aldrich, Clarence Andrews, Justus L. Bulkley, Dr. Martin Burke, Prescott Hall Butler, John T. Lockman, Devereux Emmet, Charles A. Flammer, W. F. Havemeyer, A. Foster Higgins, James Otis Hoyt & Wayland Trask – New York City

Professor Bernhard E. Fernow, Gardiner G. Hubbard and J. Walter Pilling of Washington DC

B. W. Arnold and Henry Patton of Albany, NY

Robb DePeyster Titus of New Haven

Ulysses S. Grant Jr. of New Salem Center

William S. Wicks, Mills W. Barse, Ole L. Snyder of Buffalo

Timothy D. Darling D. D. of Auburn

J. J. Albright, John Satterfield, George V. Forman, Samuel J. Niccolls, and Edward Mallinckrodt of St. Louis

Frank S. Weigley of Chicago & John Ickler of St. Paul

Abnor D. Gardner & A. D. Barber of Utica

Arthur Jenkins of Syracuse

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