

History of the Town of Webb Suggested Reading List

Compiled by Town of Webb Historian, Peg Masters
Updated 12/30/2007

*Alden, Mary. ***The Earl Covey Story***, Pub. Exposition Press, 1979; Personal story of the renowned builder of the historic Big Moose Chapel, and first proprietor/builder of the Twitchell Lake Inn and Covewood Lodge. The Covey family's ties to the Big Moose region date back to the 1870s.

Armour, Marylee. ***Heartwood -- The Adirondack Homestead Life of W. Donald Burnap***, Pub. The Brown Newspapers. Baldwinsville, NY, 1988; Reminiscences of Captain Burnap who piloted the railway mail service boat on the Fulton Chain for forty-seven years, and his account of growing up in the area along the shores of Fourth Lake.

Barlow, Jane A. (Editor) ***Big Moose Lake in the Adirondacks***. Pub. by Big Moose Lake History Project/Syracuse University Press, First Edition 2004; Extensively researched history of hotels, camps, and local families along historic Big Moose Lake in the Town of Webb, Herkimer Co.

*Beetle, David H. ***Up Old Forge Way***. Pub. Utica, NY: North Country Books, Inc. (reprint) 1984; first published in 1948, the book is a classic collection of humorous articles on the places & people in the region written by Mr. Beetle, a newspaperman with the Utica Observer Dispatch.

Brown, Henry A. L. and Walton, Richard J., ***John Brown's Tract: Lost Adirondack Empire***, The Rhode Island Historical Society, Phoenix Publishing, 1988; detailed story of the prominent John Brown Family of Providence, R. Is. and their multigenerational struggle to tame the North Woods Region of New York State, still known today as Brown's Tract. Includes the history of Herreshoff's iron mine and forge, land agents including the de Camp family, and personal correspondence among Brown family members from two centuries ago.

Cohen, Linda, Sarah Cohen & Peg Masters, ***Old Forge: Gateway to the Adirondacks***, Arcadia Publishing, 2003. Postcard photographic history of Main St., Old Forge, transportation, logging, recreation, vintage hotels, and neighboring communities in the region.

*Comstock, Edward Jr. & Mark C. Webster, ***The Adirondack League Club 1890-1990***, privately published to mark the 100th anniversary of the largest sportsmen's club in the Adirondacks; details the pioneer property/camp owners, history of the Clubhouses at Little Moose, Bisby, and Honnedaga, early transportation to the preserve, and fish and forest conservation measures undertaken by the Club over the past century.

All books listed are available in the research library at the Town of Webb Historical Association or at the Old Forge Library. An asterisk (*) indicates the book is out-of-print.

*Curtiss, Arthur Lester Byron- ***The life and adventures of Nat Foster, trapper and hunter of the Adirondacks***, Pub. 1897; An account of a revolutionary war soldier who brought his family to live in the Fulton Chain region and Nat Foster's historic trial in Herkimer for the murder of Native American Peter Waters in 1833 at the entrance to First Lake.

Donaldson, Alfred L., ***A History of the Adirondacks***, 2 vols., Pub. 1921, reprint ed., Fleischmanns, N.Y.: Purple Mountain Press, 1992; a classic additional to any Adirondack library compiled by Donaldson while seeking a cure for tuberculosis at Trudeau's sanitarium in Saranac Lake.

*Donnelly, Bill, ***A Short History of Beaver River***; private publication in 2002 for the property owners association; includes early settlers, the history of the dams built at Stillwater, postmasters, school & teachers, hotels & lumber operations.

Grady, Joseph F., ***The Adirondacks, Fulton Chain - Big Moose Region***; Old Forge, NY: North Country Books, 1st Ed. 1933; 2nd Ed. 1966; 3rd Ed. 1972; this early account of 19th century life in Brown's Tract includes the history of the Otis Arnold family, the Adirondack League Club, first settlers, transportation, camps, and hotels in the Fulton Chain-Big Moose region.

Harter, Henry A., ***Fairy Tale Railroad***. Pub. by North Country Books, Inc. 1952; the story of building Dr. William Seward Webb's Golden Chariot Railroad through the heart of the West Central Adirondacks in 1891-1892 with many photos of the stations and rolling stock used on the Mohawk & Malone (M&M) – later the Adirondack Division of the New York Central.

*Higby, Roy C., ***A Man From the Past***. Big Moose, NY: Pub. by Big Moose Press. 1974; the author is the son of early guide and hotelier James Higby who build the first camp on Big Moose Lake in 1871. The family's Higby Club hotel hosted noted early 20th century captains of industry and politicians. Roy gives a detailed account of the murder of Grace Brown by Chester Gillette at Big Moose Lake in 1906, a story made famous by Theodore Dreiser's novel, the American Tragedy, pub. in 1925.

Kudish, Michael, ***Mountain Railroads of New York State, Vol. Two: Where Did All the Tracks Go in the Central Adirondacks?*** Pub. by Purple Mtn. Press, 2007; the book includes detailed maps of the stations along the New York Central's Adirondack Division and other logging railroads that traversed the Town of Webb.

Jerome, Christine. ***An Adirondack Passage: The Cruise of the Canoe Sairy Gamp***, Pub. by Adirondack Mt. Club, 1998; the author retraces the 1883 canoe trip of George Washing Sears through the Adirondacks, including the Fulton Chain of Lakes.

Masters, Peg, ***History of the Old Forge Fire Department - 1907-2007***, Pub. Masterpieces Prod, 2007; the history of the volunteers who pioneered fire and

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ambulance services in the region including a timeline of major fires, healthcare providers, & events that shaped the development of the Old Forge resort community during the past century.

*Marleau, William R. ***Big Moose Station***. Big Moose Station, NY: Marleau Family Press, 1986; the author Bill Marleau served as a Forest Ranger at Big Moose for many years and was intimately acquainted with the area and its residents. The book is loaded with details on the history of the pioneer families, hermits, railroad and logging operations, hotels, postmasters, & schools & neighboring communities of Twitchell Lake, Carter Station, Woods Lake, Stillwater and Beaver River.

*Maloney, Robert A., ***...A Backward Look at 6th and 7th Lakes***, Sixth and Seventh Lake Improvement Association Publication Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Association from 1939 – 1989; Settlement & property histories of two lakes in the Fulton Chain just north of Town of Webb in Hamilton Co.

McMartin, Barbara, ***The Great Forests of the Adirondacks***, Pub. North Country Books, 1994 and ***The Privately Owned Adirondacks***, Pub. Lake View Press, 2004; Martin's two volumes detail the formation of the Adirondack Park, the Park's major lumber & railroad companies and private estates including Dr. Webb's Ne-Ha-Sa-Ne Park, Brandreth Park, and the Adirondack League Club formation and history.

*O'Brien, Clara V. ***God's Country***. Eagle Bay, NY: Canterbury Press, Rome, NY, 1982. An account of the residents, hotels, camps, bush pilots, and settlement of the Eagle Bay region with many unique family-contributed photographs.

Podskoch, Martin, ***Adirondack Fire Towers – Their History and Love – The Southern District***, Pub. Purple Mt. Press, 2003; Significant account of the historic fire towers in Webb including Bald (Rondaxe) Mountain, Moose River Mountain, Stillwater Mountain, and Woodhull Mountain that includes personal remembrances from former observers and forest rangers.

Reed, Rev. Frank A., ***Lumberjack Sky Pilot***, Pub. North Country Books, 1965; Depicts life in the lumber camps and major logging contractors in the region by a first-hand account from Rev. Frank Reed who also served as pastor of Niccolls Church in Old Forge for many years.

*Simms, Jephtha Root, ***Trappers of New York : or, a biography of Nicholas Stoner & Nathaniel Foster***, pub: 1850. This vintage volume relates the story of two trappers who frequented Brown's Tract early in the 19th century. Stoner was an ardent fisherman and his favorite lake – Nick's Lake, is the location of a State park on the outskirts of Old Forge. Foster is the noted legendary that killed the last Native American in the Adirondacks.

Scheffler, William & Frank Carey, ***Big Moose Lake, NY (Postcard History)***, Pub. Arcadia, 2000; A vintage photographic history of Big Moose Lake's camps, boathouses, hotels, and settlers.

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Thompson, Pat, **Beaver River – Oasis In The Wilderness**, Pub. Beaver River Press, 2000; a personal account of a family that has operated The Norridgewock Hotel since 1921 at Beaver River on the southeastern shoreline of the Stillwater Reservoir. The remote hamlet, six-tenths of a square mile, is completely surrounded by State land without road access.

Timm, Ruth, ***Raquette Lake - A Time to Remember***. Raquette Lake: North Country Books, Inc. Utica, NY. 1989, a well-researched account of early settlers in the region such as Alvah Dunning and other guides, camps and transportation on one of the most historic lakes in the region. The book includes the story of W. W. Durant who herald the beginning of the Golden Era of artistic "Great Camp" life in the Adirondacks.