



Cragsmoor, The Art Colony (?)

by Walter Little

Was Cragsmoor really an Art Colony or was it a nice place where people came to spend the summer? In 1920-21, there were fifty or more summer homes, six boarding houses, and one real hotel (*Cragsmoor Inn*). The people who came to these places began to arrive in late May or June, just for the summer, and leave for their real homes before cold weather arrived. Yes, we did have several artists in Cragsmoor but they, too, only came for the summer. These were the years that my older sister and I began to deliver milk to most of these homes and a couple of boarding houses.

Most of these buildings, including the hotel, were not built and equipped for cold weather living. By October, they were closed for the winter months to be reopened the following spring. When the snows arrived, most of these homes and boarding houses, even the *Cragsmoor Inn*, were pretty much isolated because most of the roads leading to these places were either privately owned or were owned more or less and maintained by the *Cragsmoor Improvement Association*, an organization formed and ruled by the summer residents only. The only maintenance was done in the spring and summer, nothing in the winter. Some time around 1940, the *Town of Wawarsing Highway Department* took over and maintained these roads.

According to my old Webster Dictionary, I don't believe that Cragsmoor really fit the description of an Artist Colony. This is just my opinion of Cragsmoor as an Art Colony and maybe, too, of some of the other people who made Cragsmoor their real home back then. After living there for the first 25 years of my life, I still live within less than 15 miles of Cragsmoor. I have a lot of fond memories of the wonderful people who made their home there and kept Cragsmoor alive during the cold, snowy winter months back then. (Having never used a typewriter and not owning a computer, I write the way people did in Cragsmoor back then.)

communication with those having such to offer."

The collections of the *Ellenville Public Library & Museum* include much more about the individual boarding houses and hotels, including pictures. Many additional scenes can be found in the extensive postcard collection, which is indexed.

In *To The Mountains By Rail*, Manville B. Wakefield commented that "In 1898, *Summer Homes* appeared in hard cover and was used extensively in the depots at the various resort points as a ready reference book that generally hung on a nail near the ticket window. They were also available for reference in all the leading New York hotels." His summary of *Summer Homes* was that "During its long tenure of publication, *Summer Homes* could indeed be read as a barometer of passenger travel and the economic stability of the railroad company."

We in this area probably read *Summer Homes* as a measure of the growth of the resort industry in the Town of Wawarsing at the turn of the century and a very valuable local history tool identifying family names and buildings that, one hundred years later, still stand.



"30 MINUTE FITNESS & WEIGHT LOSS CENTERS"
Kathleen Strong
 Owner

170 Canal Street Ellenville, NY 12428 845-647-0035 Fax: 845-647-0035	Wurtsboro Plaza (Rt. 209) Wurtsboro, NY 12790 845-888-2343 Fax: 845-888-2350
---	---


Buying or Selling
...See Us First

LUCILLE HAND

LICENSED REAL ESTATE BROKER

LucilleHand@realtor.com
Lhandrealest@catskill.net

28 N. Main St. (Rte. 209) Ellenville, N.Y. 12428 Tel. 845-647-8020 FAX 845-647-5293	Rt. 32, P.O. Box 113 Mountainville, N.Y. 10953 Tel/Fax 845-534-5549
--	---

FRESH * LOCAL * CERTIFIED ORGANIC
 Vegetables * Wild blueberries * Cut flowers

RUSTY PLOUGH FARM

Oleh & Nađia Maczaj

331 Dowe Road, Ellenville, NY 12428
 ph/fax: 845-647-6911; email: rustyploUGH@earthlink.net

ASK ABOUT OUR WEEKLY ORDER SERVICE!
 See us at the Farmers' Market!
 Liberty: Fridays 3-6:30 * Suffern: Saturdays 9-1

LOCK THIRTY ONE

Lunch ~ Dinner

81 Center Street
 Ellenville, NY 12428
 845-647-0090

Take-out • Catering • Friday Fish Fry
 Back Yard Barbecues • Daily Specials
 And much more!



Come visit our Canal Street booth at the Blueberry Festival on
 August 27th and check out our Pies!