

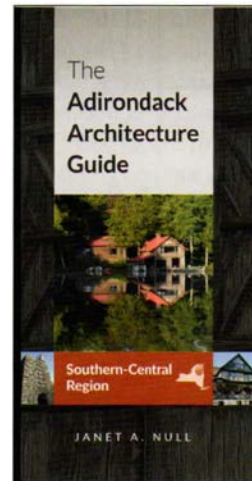
Janet A. Null, *The Adirondack Architecture Guide: South-Central Region*. With essays contributed by David Biggs, Hallie Bond, Jeffrey Flagg, and Jane Mackintosh. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2017; 356 pp.; paperback; ISBN 9781438466668; \$29.95.

The Adirondack Architecture Guide: South-Central Region launches an ambitious and timely three-volume series that stands apart from other works on the built environment of New York State's mountainous Adirondack Park. The "park" is a land-use overlay designation on 9,375 square miles of private and state-owned land administered with stringent regulations to control development and protect wilderness, forests, and lakes. The area's architectural resources, clustered in small villages, hamlets, and remote private developments have grown in public visibility and appreciation both nationally and locally, thanks to three decades of groundwork by Adirondack Architectural Heritage, a regional advocacy and educational organization. The guide is the first attempt in this region to bring together and summarize a vast amount of local historical research, National Register nominations, and architectural monographs in a place-specific format. Organized into 14 long motor tours, the guide presents over 700 entries, each illustrated by clear and well-composed, albeit small, photograph. Readers familiar with the *AJA Guide to New York City* will feel at home with the format.

The sub-region chosen for this first volume takes in the area south of the Adirondack High Peaks, excluding the park's eastern edge, which surrounds Lake George, and the west shore of Lake Champlain. Located closest to the urban centers between the Eastern seaboard and Midwest, this part of the park features the earliest and best known examples of buildings and structures built in the Adirondack rustic tradition. If you are looking for places built or garnished

playfully with logs, twigs and glacial rubble, you will not be disappointed, for the guide locates hundreds of examples ranging from "Great Camps" of the Gilded Age (including Camps Santanoni and Sagamore, both open to the public) to tourist cabins of the 1930s.

The entries in this guide, however, are not all built of the twigs and stones that give the Adirondacks its renowned architectural identity. What sets this guide apart from the



outsized body of published work on Adirondack resort rustic is its fresh treatment of the vernacular and civic buildings and structures that the region's permanent residents built for themselves. The author is egalitarian in selecting this content with a keen eye, including bridges and

forest-fire observation towers, mills and mid-century modern ice cream stands, garages and boat houses, and representative kit houses, along with singular civic and religious buildings and exceptional examples of storefronts and houses. These entries, accompanied by solid introductory essays on early settlement, industry, railroads, twentieth-century tourism, children's camps, and kit houses expand the narrative of the region's socio-economic heritage beyond Adirondack rustic. All entries are visible from a public right-of-way.

The author is a preservation architect with deep experience in the Adirondacks and a trustworthy guide who invested extraordinary drive and passion into this project. And it was worth the effort, for the guide succeeds as exemplary in presenting a difficult region's built diversity accurately and with substance and authority. Her

concise building descriptions are written clearly and with a positive tone to convey the significance of each place, identify important features and materials, and differentiate construction phases. Although her intended audience is not identified in the introduction, there is something here for anyone interested in the subject. The text is accessible to non-professionals and should help residents and casual daytrippers look at these places with new discernment, understanding and respect. The varied forms, details, and materials evident in the entries should be of great interest to preservationists, conservators, architects, and cultural geographers who plan to visit the Adirondacks in person or research its buildings from their desks. It also fills a needed gap for a reference under one cover to inform design-review decisions in the park. The guide concludes with a well-illustrated glossary of architectural styles and terms and a list of architects and builders with capsule biographies. The guide's only shortcoming is the absence of an index, which would be useful in customizing driving tours or research around building types and/or architects and builders.

-Wes Haynes

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