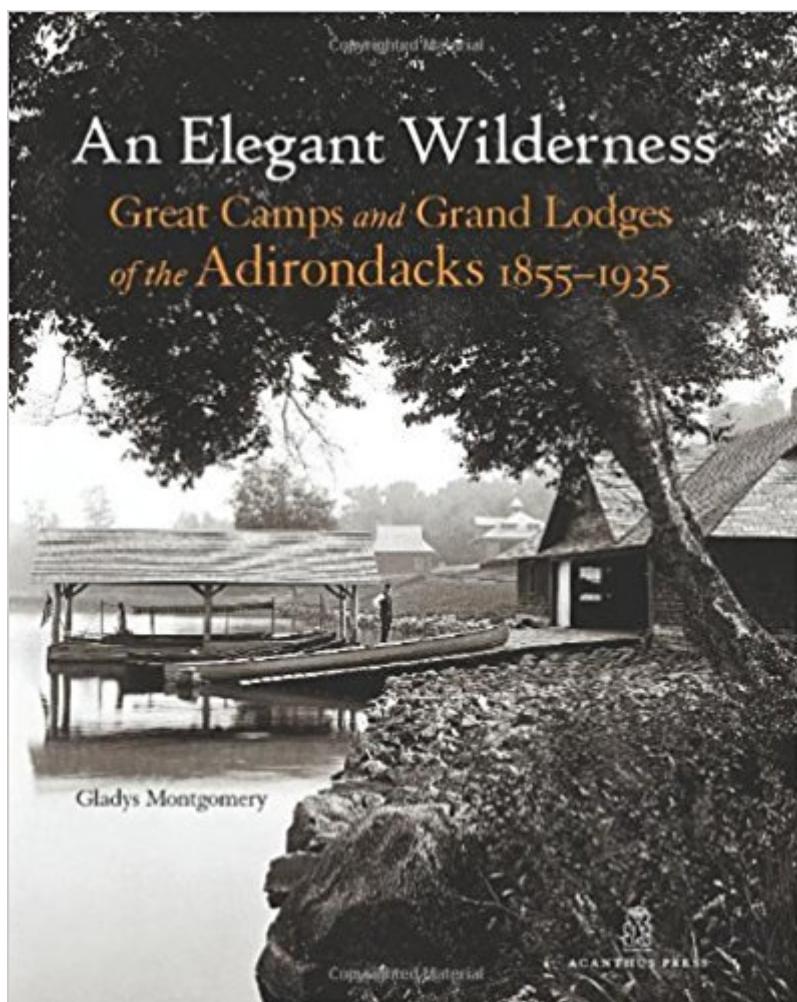


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# An Elegant Wilderness: Great Camps And Grand Lodges Of The Adirondacks (The Architecture Of Leisure)



## Synopsis

The Victorian Society in America Metropolitan Chapter 2011 Award for Publication-Architectural HistoryThe Adirondack Center for Writing 2011 Literary Award-Best Book, NonfictionThe first book to place the rustic Adirondack architectural style in the context of the cultural, social, and environmental history, *An Elegant Wilderness*, showcases the intensely private retreats set into the pine forests on the shores of the region's shimmering lakes. Open earlier to tourism and more accessible than the western United States, the Adirondack region is where many urbanites of the Industrial Age came to experience the wilderness. It was in the Adirondacks that the constricting social proprieties relaxed, that city swells hunted in deer-filled forests and angled in trout-stocked lakes, that women shed their corsets to hike, fish, and play tennis, and that children learned to appreciate the great outdoors. Among the owners of the Great Camps there were the mining magnates Berthold Hochschild, Daniel Guggenheim, and Adolph Lewisohn, financiers J. Pierpont Morgan, Otto Kahn, and Isaac Newton Seligman, New York governor Levi Morton, President Benjamin Harrison, and the prominent philosopher William James and neuroscientist James Jackson Putnam. Women camp owners of note included Lucy Carnegie, Margaret Emerson (Vanderbilt), and Marjorie Merriweather Post. Published by Acanthus Press in collaboration with The Adirondack Museum, *An Elegant Wilderness* combines architectural, social, and cultural history with biography, and evocative archival black-and-white archival photographs of rustic homes, idyllic lakes, and recreational pastimes, most of which are published for the first time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gladys Montgomery and Acanthus Press make a seminal contribution to the literature on the subject with this book. Drawing on the vast collections of the Adirondack Museum's library and historic photographs, as well as other regional repositories, Ms. Montgomery skillfully depicts the social milieu, architectural precedents, decorative aesthetics, and environmental awareness that stimulated the Adirondack rustic architectural style, along with the individual stories of the people who built the camps and lived the grand life there. --Caroline M. Welsh, Director Emerita, The Adirondack Museum...the most comprehensive book yet about Adirondack rustic architecture and its origins. --Lake George Mirror, July 21, 2011...the most comprehensive book yet about Adirondack rustic architecture and its origins. --Lake George Mirror, July 21, 2011

Gladys Montgomery is an award-winning writer and editor. The author of five books and the founding editor of Berkshire Living Home + Garden, she has penned more than 200 magazine features about architecture, design, antiques, and historic buildings, which have appeared in regional, national, and international publications. In 2007, she transposed this expertise into a real estate career with The Kinderhook Group. She lives in West Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

This would be a great book if there were accompanying maps, diagrams, or plans. As is it is a series of pictures with a little bit of info on the owners. I have noticed with each passing edition that there are fewer and fewer plans published in Acanthus books. I understand that this is an editorial position, but these are, after all, books on domestic architecture. For the price Acanthus charges for these books I expect more. It is too bad that they seem to be either getting lazy or just think those of us interested in architectural history are just happy with pictures and brief summaries. I was thinking of advance ordering the volume on San Francisco houses coming this fall, but I think I will wait and look first. Way to go Acanthus.

This was an opportunity to create the definitive scholarly text on this architectural vernacular. Unfortunately, it was squandered and turned out a lightweight coffee table effort. Surprising for Acanthus to publish such a thing. I hope someone will nail the topic in the near future. This is an undermined field.

Not an area I was overly interested in but I have to say I really enjoyed the book. It sticks to the Acanthus Press formula of great pics and plans along with history of each property.

This is a wonderful collection of the photographic and written history of the great Adirondack camps of the early 20th century. Significant in social and architectural history this book will fascinate just about everyone.

love it

I really wanted to like this book. Which isn't to say it doesn't have good points. Written in collaboration with the Adirondack Museum, the author drew upon the museum's archives to assemble a very nice array of period photographs. The text is informative. In particular it discusses each camp's chain of ownership across the generations. This is material which is not readily available. So why was I somewhat disappointed? For a book written in collaboration with a museum, I would have expected something a little more scholarly. In particular, *Elegant Wilderness* is lacking with respect to maps and diagrams. At the very least there should have been an overall map of the Adirondacks indicating the location of each camp. Also sorely needed were sketch plans of the layout of each camp. A half a dozen photos for each camp, with no clear indication of orientation, made it impossible to visualize the overall arrangement of the buildings. One example of this: the day before I purchased this book, I took the guided tour of the Sagamore camp near Raquette Lake. I was struck by the layout of the buildings, the contrast between the "upper" and "lower" camps, the isolation of the staff buildings, the magnificent setting of the main camp and dining hall overlooking the lake, etc. But when I looked at the Sagamore chapter in *Elegant Wilderness*, none of this was apparent. I could glean little about how the buildings related to one another and how the camp overall was oriented. Something that a simple sketch plan could have alleviated. Let me be clear: I don't regret purchasing *Elegant Wilderness*. I have a long standing interest in the Adirondacks and the Great Camps and I usually reflexively buy anything related to that topic. In that sense this book fits in well with my interests and I enjoyed perusing it. I just wish it had better realized its potential.

Having just returned from the Adirondacks and enjoying yet again its addictive charms, I was extremely pleased to be able to attend Potteron Books lecture by Gladys Montgomery on her wonderful new book. Two other friends who are frequent guests at a delightful private family camp

near Blue Mountain Lake met me at the lecture. We were all very impressed with the author and her scholarship. The book is very well done, giving what can only be called an insiders view to the Great Camps. This book is a pleasure to read, or more aptly, pour over. I purchased it as a Christmas gift for my husband, but ended up giving it to him the September night I brought it home. For anyone who loves the Adirondacks, it's history, mystery and romance, this book is a true testament to the lure of the area and the indescribable attraction one can feel after being there.

There is very little new material here. The writer has taken wonderful photographs from the museum's collection, but the text itself provides little new information about the properties. The lack of maps is also regrettable. In addition the writer swipes whole sentences from other published works without attribution. For instance, the section about the Carnegie Camp is taken from a well researched article in Adirondack Architecture by another author. Letters are also quoted with absolutely no citation. I am surprised that the museum would lend its name to this type of cut and paste book.

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