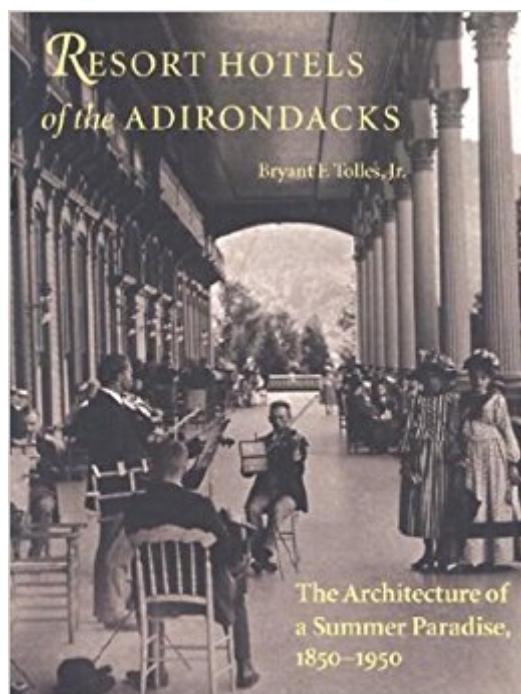


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# Resort Hotels Of The Adirondacks: The Architecture Of A Summer Paradise, 1850-1950



## Synopsis

During the 1850s, New York's Adirondack region saw the birth of a leisure world centered in the area's large resort hotels. These spectacular structures clearly reflected the dramatic social and technological changes that unfolded in the United States between 1850 and 1950. In his new book, Bryant F. Tolles, Jr. studies the architectural development of these extraordinary retreats in order to explore changing American attitudes toward nature and landscape, fashion and culture, transportation, and innovations of various sorts. He also delves into the resorts' eventual decline, which was rooted in their vulnerability as wooden structures as well as in the ever-changing preferences of their guests. With over two hundred illustrations—many of them historic photographs, along with architectural plans, reproductions of printed "views," and recent shots of the remaining hotels and their related buildings—Resort Hotels of the Adirondacks captures the glorious spirit of a bygone world and reveals fundamental shifts in American cultural expectations. Tolles brings his chronicle up to the present by exploring the two surviving grand Adirondack resort hotels—the second Hotel Champlain (at Bluff Point on Lake Champlain) and the third Sagamore Hotel (at Bolton Landing on Lake George). The book concludes with a discussion of several imaginatively conceived but never-built resort hotels. Tolles has utilized an authoritative array of sources, including guidebooks, local histories, newspaper articles, maps, county and town records, business records, guest correspondence, and diary entries. His comprehensive history creates a detailed picture of luxury in a resort setting and enriches our understanding of American life and culture during a period of radical change.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 320 pages

Publisher: UPNE; 1st edition (June 1, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1584650966

ISBN-13: 978-1584650966

Product Dimensions: 8.8 x 1.1 x 11.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,097,882 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #73 in Books > Travel > United States > New York > Adirondacks #2909 in Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > Buildings > Residential #4428 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering >

## Customer Reviews

"Highly readable, lavishly illustrated (including a color section), solidly researched, and well indexed, with an extensive bibliography, *Resort Hotels of the Adirondacks* is both authoritative and absorbing." • *New York History: Quarterly Journal of the NY State Historical Association* "Mr. Tolles has assembled a tremendous array of vintage photographs, as well as floor plans, and he writes with skill, clarity and a historian's discipline. . . His footnotes are extensive, and the bibliography alone is a trove of useful Adirondack information and perspective. This meaty work will be referred to far into the future." • *Lake George Magazine* "Tolles writes thoroughly but approachably on the hundred year heyday of these architectural dinosaurs, from the mammoth inns...to the merely modest." • *Adirondack Life* "This attractive and informative book chronicles the architecture of Adirondack resort hotels . . . the text and photographs will help readers realize how amazing these resort hotels were and are." • *The Sunday Gazette* (Schenectady, NY)

“In his well-illustrated and meticulously researched study, Bryant Tolles has resurrected a fascinating array of once-imposing buildings and has illuminated much about the tourist industry that brought them into being. A vital contribution to the history of the Adirondacks.” (David Tatham, Syracuse University)

Bryant Tolles is the undisputed master of the architectural history of nineteenth-century resort architecture of New England. This book is one of a set of similar books delving into the detailed history of all of the large, grand resort hotels in the Adirondacks of upstate New York (which, technically, is not part of New England). Given the fact that virtually all of these hotels no longer exist, the record of their history is vital and Mr. Tolles is to be commended for his efforts. The book is scholarly and written to appeal to the average reader. The black-and-white illustrations are virtually all period photographs and advertising materials for the hotels, including both exterior and interior views. I recommend this book for those who are interested in the broad history of resort architecture, especially that of the Northeast of the United States and for those interested in the Adirondacks and its history.

This is the fourth book by Tolles that I have purchased; the first was a guide to the historic buildings

of New Hampshire. Another is on the historic hotels of the White Mountains. The most recent one I've purchased, *Summer by the Seaside*, is on the wooden resort hotels of coastal New England. This book is a fine survey of the architecture of the grand wooden hotels that once stood in the resort areas of the Adirondacks. Most of the buildings in this book are gone; the book provides a fitting memorial for some long-disappeared handsome buildings. Until I saw this book, I never realized that as many interesting hotel structures had been built in the Adirondacks - I've always associated the great wooden hotels with New England. History and architecture are well-documented. Photography and reproductions are excellent. Tolles' books are a great find for anyone interested in historic 19th century American architecture and the possibilities of wood frame buildings.

I was born during the wrong era. I love to view photos and read about Victorian times. Sounds like a beautiful time to be alive.

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