

Help support efforts to preserve the history of Wanakena and educate future generations?
Join the Wanakena Historical Association
 Please Mail to: Wanakena Historical Association •
 PO Box 73 • Wanakena, NY 13695

NAME	
Address	
City, State, Zip	
E-mail	
Individual Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10 for 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 for 3 years
Family Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 for 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> \$60 for 3 years
Lifetime Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$200
Donation for the History Center	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____
Donation in Memory of:	
All Gifts are tax deductible	EIN: 16-1580 148

Enjoy your self-guided tour today!

If you would like to comment on your tour experience or share photos, family histories, artifacts or special stories for preservation by the Wanakena Historical Association, send a message to:

Wanakenaha@aol.com

-or-

Facebook — Wanakena Historical Association

-or write us at

WHA

PO Box 73

Wanakena, NY 13695

J. Otto Hamel was born in 1876 and first came to Wanakena in 1901 to work as a millwright for the Rich Lumber Company. Throughout the years he served the community in countless ways, including founding of the NYS Ranger School, the Clifton-Fine Hospital and the St. Lawrence County Historical Association. We dedicate this Walking Tour to honor his commitment to conservation and reforestation, his love of history and local lore, and his tireless work to support the village of Wanakena.

Wanakena 1902 Wanakena is unique in the town of Fine because it is a planned hamlet. In 1902, Herbert Rich came to this area to purchase land for the next home of his lumber business. Buildings were erected from hemlock lumber (400 carloads) and dismantled homes brought by train from Granere, PA.

The Rich Lumber Company was formed and the village called Wanakena was carefully laid out, including water systems, school and church. Six miles of railroad were constructed to connect the village with the Carthage and Adirondack Railroad at Benson Mines and . . . Five Mills went into business.

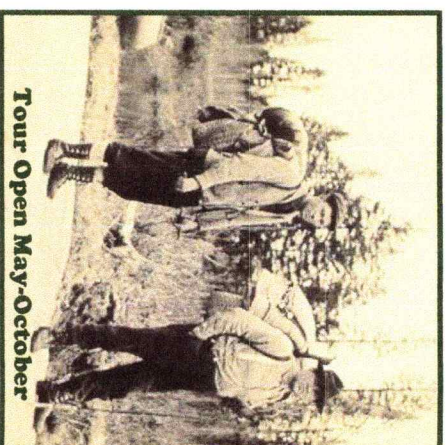
Tourism has always been a vital part of Wanakena. Today, it is home to many seasonal, as well as year-round, residents. It provides a beautiful area for hunting, fishing, boating, camping and hiking to nearby mountains.

SUNY-ESF Ranger School 1912

The SUNY-ESF Ranger School at Wanakena is the oldest forest technology program in the USA. It was formed in 1912 after Rich Lumber Co. donated 1,814 acres of land to the College of Forestry at Syracuse University, which dedicated 22 acres for a NY Ranger School. Wanakena resident J. Otto Hamel is credited with pursuing the idea of establishing an experimental demonstration forest after Rich Lumber cut all useable timber in the region and ended its operations in Wanakena. Since then, the Ranger School has trained over 4,000 students and earned a national reputation for excellence and is an integral part of the SUNY-ESF Dept of Forest and Natural Resources Management.

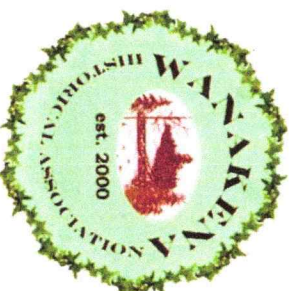
WELCOME

J. Otto Hamel Walking Tour of Wanakena History



Tour Open May-October

Developed by the Wanakena Historical Association with support from the SUNY ESF Ranger School.



Special thanks to the family of Roger Rich, for their support and gifts to develop this historic walking tour.



ALDICO

ALDICO
38 Front St.
Wanakena, NY 13695

The Tour

The J. Otto Hamel Walking Tour was created and maintained by the Wanakena Historical Association, founded in the year 2000.

1 - KIOSK - Wanakena Town History

Homes; Footbridge; Boating; Living in Wanakena then and now; and the old Rich & Andrews General Store.

2 - Picture station #1 - Old Town Center

Town square; Post Office; Train Depot; views up 1907 Front Street; and the Reading Room House.

3 - Original Oswegatchie Channel Marker

Prior to the use of floating buoys, these markers were placed on stumps that were perilous obstacles in the river after the dam at Cranberry Lake was built in 1867.

4 - Picture station #2 - Wanakena Riverfront

Town Dock where train passengers caught boats that took them to the resort hotels on Cranberry Lake, Cora's Restaurant; Boathouses; Dance Hall; and the Beach as it evolved over the years.

5 - Picture station #3 - Hotel Wanakena

The second building erected in Wanakena by the Rich Lumber Co. in 1902 at a cost of \$75,000. It boasted steam heat, electric lighting, and lavish accommodations with an expansive view from the veranda.

6 - Wanakena History Center

Restored original Rich Lumber Co. home with displays of artifacts, photographs, and other memorabilia of Wanakena's 120+ year history.

7 - Picture station #4 - Second Street Homes

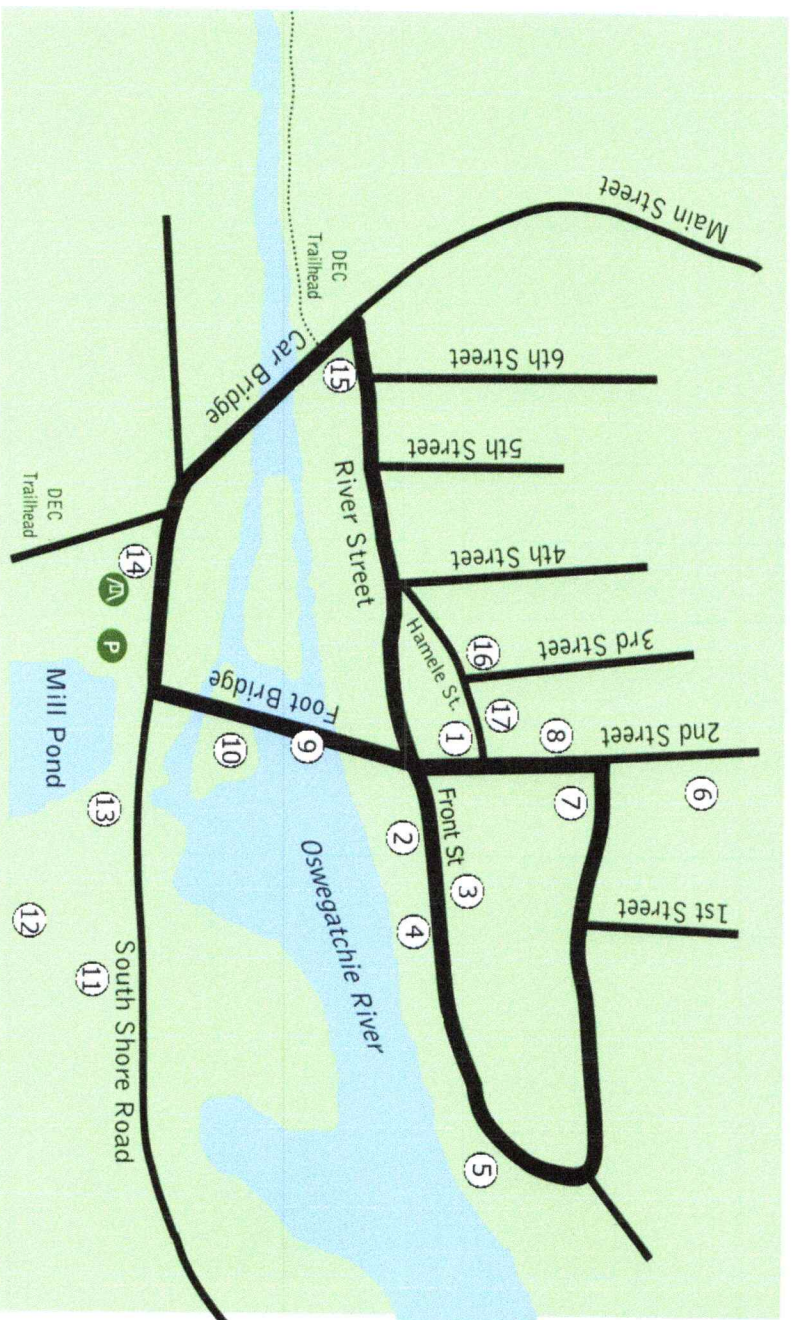
Pictures of 1907 homes, how it looked then and now, the old Boardwalk, and the 1904 Church.

8 - Western Adirondack Presbyterian Church

Dedicated in 1904. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2007. The church still holds Sunday services from June through mid-September.

9 - Suspension Footbridge

Erected in 1902 to provide a crossing for the workers living in town to reach the mills on the South shore. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999, but in 2014 was destroyed by an ice-jam. The



Wanakena Historical Association led efforts to raise over \$450,000 to rebuild the bridge that was dedicated in 2017.

10 - KIOSK - History of the Footbridge

Historic photos, the 2014 ice jam, efforts to rebuild and events & donors that made it happen.

11 - Wanakena Sewer Treatment Plant

12 - Wanakena Labyrinth

Created and maintained by Wanakena volunteers, this Santa-Rosa style labyrinth is adorned with wildflowers. A 1/4 mile meditative walk that leads to a humble stump to sit upon before making the 1/4 mile walk back out of the Labyrinth.

13 - KIOSK - Ranger School, Lumbering & Mills

Rich Lumber Company; Lumber Yards; Sawmills; Camp Life; Working on the Railroad; and the Wanakena Ranger School.

14 - Wanakena Town Water System

The Wanakena Water Co. is the smallest private water company in NY State. Since 1902, Spring water has been piped from two natural springs located in the forever wild area of the Adirondack Park.

15 - Bench with a View

16 - Picture station #5 - Conroy Hotel

During the Rich Lumber days, the Hotel catered to single mill workers, area loggers and transients. After that it continued as a tourist Inn. After the original burned, it was rebuilt as the Riverside Inn, when this burned it was never rebuilt. Also pictured is the Partlow home and garden located just up third street.

17 - Otto's Abode (see hours posted)

A store/visitor's center/performance + exhibition space where visitors can grab a snack, a map, and a bag of ice, and be informed, entertained, and puzzled. Right next store to a US Post Office..

For more information about Wanakena, Go To:

⇒ [Wanakena Historic Association on Facebook](http://WanakenaHistoricAssociationonFacebook)

⇒ www.wanakena.com

⇒ www.ottosabode.org - weekly blog