

# Historic Walking Tour Lake Placid, NY

Incorporated 1900

The Lake Placid-North Elba Historical Society invites you to take a walking tour of some of the busy main streets and quiet side avenues of our lovely Village of Lake Placid. The Village was inhabited as early as 1805 with an iron mill but was not incorporated until 1900. Currently, the average year round population is 3000.

The tour is just over four miles. Take it at your own pace and indulge your curiosity about the sites along the way. Do part of it or all of it. Do it in one day or several. See the history of many of these buildings. There are hills (after all, you're in the mountains!), so be prepared for some good exercise.

During your walk you will pass by many old homes and businesses, some dating back to the late 1800's and some quite new. Many are unique to our little Village. Some businesses on Main Street survived the "1919 Main Street Fire" and another was built to accommodate the visitors for the 1980 Olympics. The Library has been in existence since 1884 with dozens of improvements and add-ons. There are various interesting eating places, resting benches and shops for diversion along the way. Comfortable walking shoes will make this tour a wonderful way to spend time getting to know the Village of Lake Placid. Welcome and enjoy!

## 1. THE HISTORY MUSEUM and LAKE PLACID DEPOT

The Lake Placid depot was built in 1904. The trains came and went here daily until April 24, 1965 when New York Central Railroad ceased operations on short notice. Americans were in love with the automobile and the depot fell silent.

In 1967, the station was purchased by Lake Placid sisters M. Frances and Louise Brewster. The building and its land was their generous gift to the community for use by the Lake Placid-North Elba Historical Society's history museum. The station has been used to tell the stories of Lake Placid's history ever since.

Once the trains stopped, few people ever imagined they might run again. The Utica to Lake Placid line was restored by New York State for the 1980 Olympic Winter Games, but bankruptcy halted the trains again. In 2000 the Adirondack Scenic Railroad returned with assistance from New York State funding and a spirit and labor of love by countless volunteers.

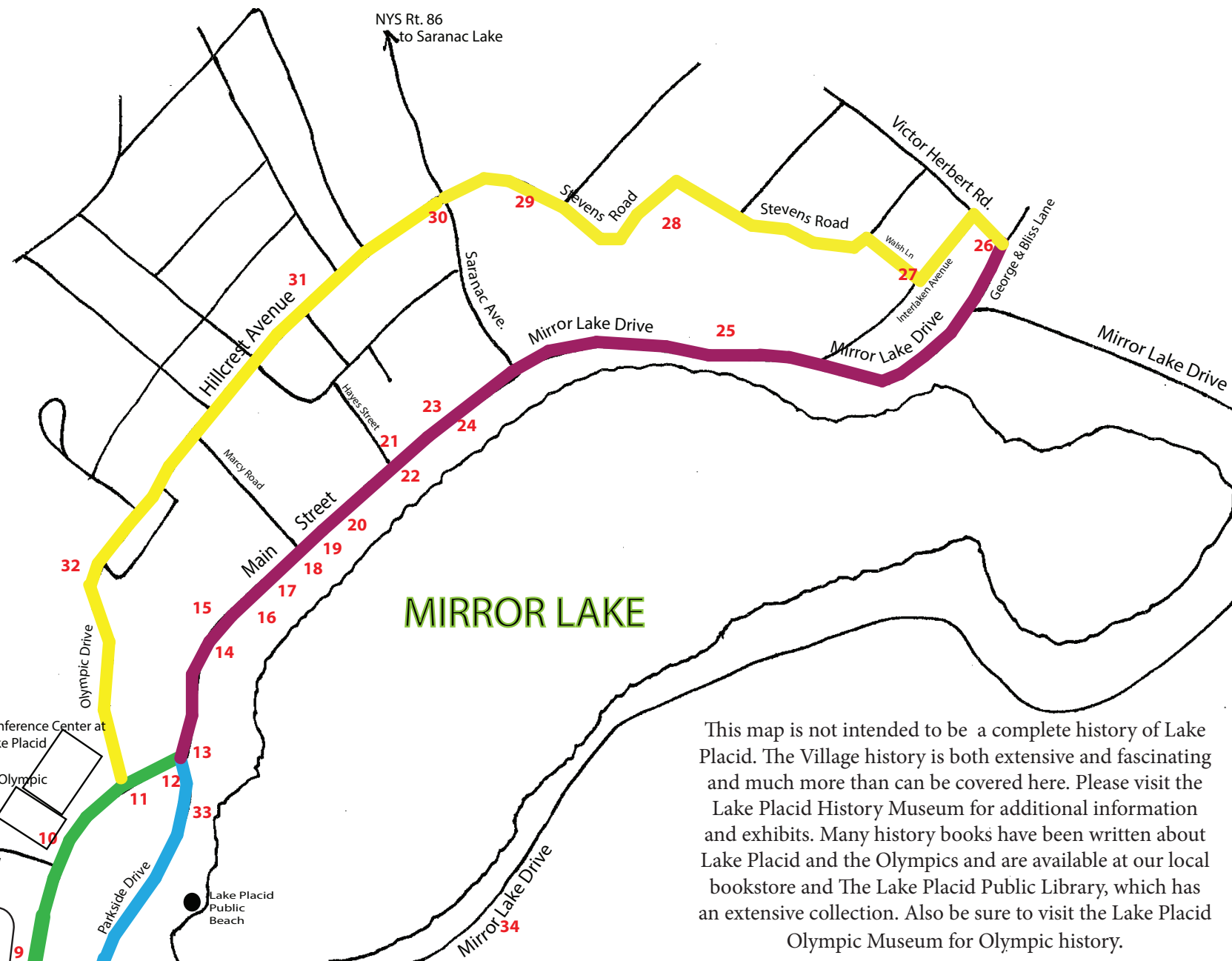
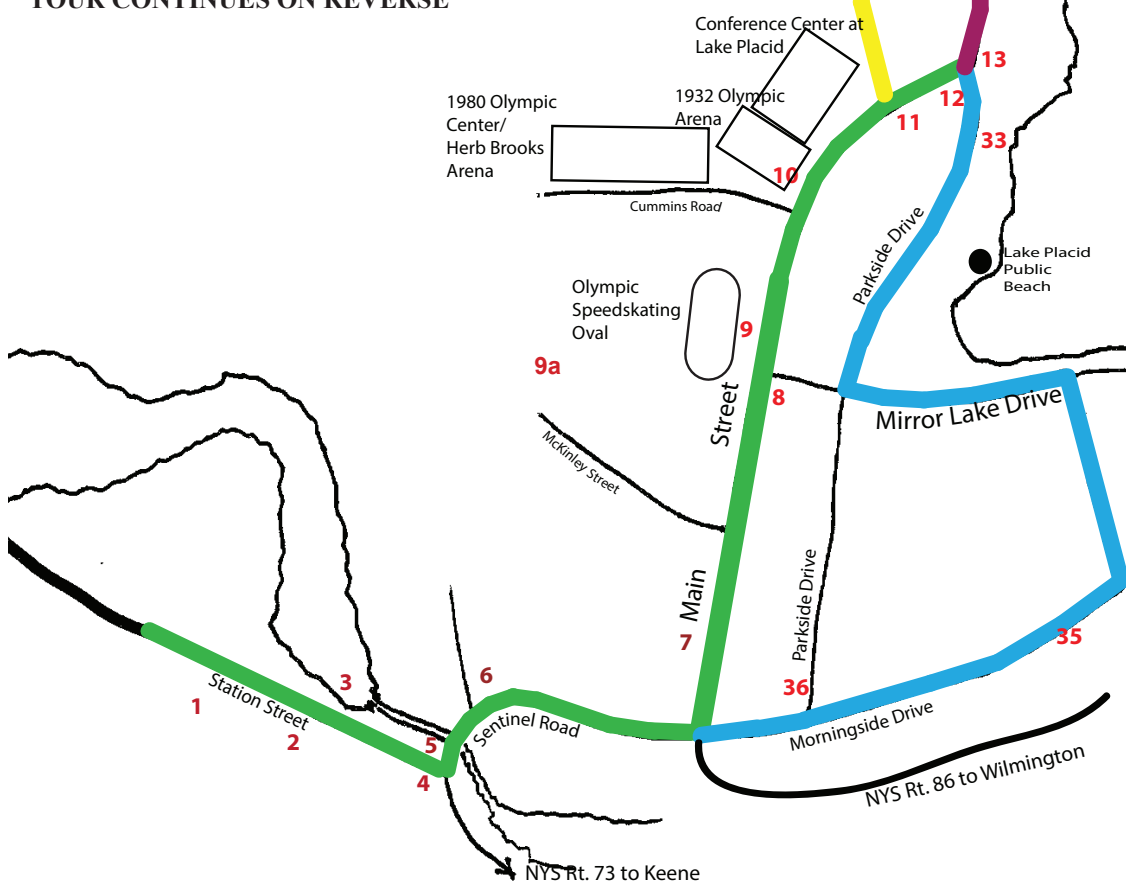
## 2. HURLEY BROTHERS BUILDING

Three brothers moved into the area in the early 1900's and began purchasing land in what is known now as Averyville. They also established a grain, hay, wood and coal business and erected the building on Station Street in 1909. The third generation of Hurleys continues to occupy the building, selling oil and propane.

## 3. MILL POND

In 1855 a wooden dam was constructed to create the Mill Pond. Due to the influx of citizens and the need for homes, saw mills were built along the shores to create shingles and laths. In the winter the pond was the site of the first toboggan and skating areas. Various storms finally caused the failure of the old wooden dam and a new dam was finished in time for the 1980 Olympic Winter Games.

## TOUR CONTINUES ON REVERSE



This map is not intended to be a complete history of Lake Placid. The Village history is both extensive and fascinating and much more than can be covered here. Please visit the Lake Placid History Museum for additional information and exhibits. Many history books have been written about Lake Placid and the Olympics and are available at our local bookstore and The Lake Placid Public Library, which has an extensive collection. Also be sure to visit the Lake Placid Olympic Museum for Olympic history.

View from Signal Hill looking South upon Mirror Lake, Main St. and Hillcrest Avenue



- Hillcrest Ave/Signal Hill - 1.8 miles - elevation changes = 153 feet
- Upper Main Street - .73 Miles - elevation changes = 18 feet
- Lower Main Street/Newman - .95 miles - elevation changes = 145 feet
- Lake Placid Club/Parkside Dr. - .77 miles - elevation changes = 76 feet



**4. 6115 Sentinel Rd - Liquids and Solids**

Built in 1886 as George White’s General Store and at one time housed the Newman Post Office. Mainly known as “The Handlebar,” a bar and restaurant.

**5. 6125 Sentinel Rd. - Lisa G’s**

Originally known as George White’s Opera House, the top floor contained a stage and seating for 500. The middle floor was a hardware store. The first floor was a butcher shop. Later on, landscaping enclosed the bottom floor cutting the building to two stories. It has been used as a drug store, nightclubs and restaurants. Originally built in 1885.

**6. 6143 Sentinel Rd. - Raoil Bldg**

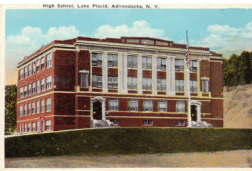
This building was originally established as a mercantile building. Part of the building was used as the Newman Post Office until the erection of the Main St. office.

**7. 2764 Main St. - Art Devlin’s Olympic Motor Inn**

Founded by (and still operated by the family of) Olympic Ski Jumper and ABC Wide World of Sports ski jumping color commentator, Lake Placid’s own Art Devlin.



Olympics, remains as constructed (which sadly, eliminated the opera house space).



**8. 2693 Main Street - North Elba Town Hall**

The first formal town hall was completed on this site in 1903. It was called “The Tin Playhouse” for two reasons: because it was sheathed in tin (a fact that greatly contributed to its demise), and because the “Opera House” theatrical space was located in one of its upper floors. The 1903 building burned down in 1915, and was reconstructed, including the opera house space, and except for renovations for the 1980

**9a. Lake Placid High School**

south wing, 1922; Center and north wing, 1934-35, further additions completed 2001 and 2004. “New” Lake Placid High School built in 1922. The first masonry school for Lake Placid, constructed after the old wooden school was removed from the site, cut into sections, and removed to Park Place (where it became part of the Lake Placid Club). During the 1980 Olympics, the school was home to the International

Press Center with a bar, so it’s the only school in NYS ever to have held a liquor license!

**9. 1932 Olympic Stadium, 1980 Olympic Speed Skating Oval**

The present Olympic Speed-skating oval was once the site of many early buildings: the Hotel Albert, an apartment house, a blacksmith shop, private homes, etc. These were demolished when the land was excavated and prepared for the building of the stadium for the 1932 Winter Olympics, situated below the Lake Placid High School. The outlet of Mirror Lake also ran through this land; when the Oval was engineered for the 1932 Olympics, the outlet was piped underground. The Olympic Stadium was where the opening ceremony took place. At the center of the stadium was a speed skating course and hockey rink. A completely new speed skating short course was built on the same site for the 1980 Olympic Winter Games. It was later renamed to honor pioneer Placid speed skater James “Bunny” Sheffield.



**10. The Olympic Center** - Tours available inside for a complete history. The Lake Placid Olympic Museum is also located here.

The large white section was completed in 1979 for the 1980 Olympics. The tan brick structure is the original Olympic Arena, where 1932 Olympic Winter Games figure skating competitions were held. At the far North end, the Conference Center at Lake Placid

was completed in 2012, replacing the 1960’s-era Convention Center. The Lake Placid Visitor Center is also located in the new Conference Center building, 1st floor.

**11. Cunningham’s Ski Barn**

Erected in 1912 as the village firehouse, the building remained in that use until sold by the village in the 1980s. Since 1988 it has housed a ski shop. The most distinguishing feature is the hose tower, which is intact and visible from a considerable distance along Main Street.

**12. 2591 Main Street - Lake Placid Post Office**

This first formal post office building in Lake Placid was completed in 1936. The building is included in a National Register of Historic Places Multiple-Resource District composed of New York State post offices built between 1858-1943. The post office was located in different commercial building on Main Street until the building of this structure.

**13. 2533 Main Street - Beglin’s Jewelers**

The first drug store in town was reportedly located here. This building, c. 1880, is the first home to the Bank of Lake Placid, May 4, 1909. Henry Van Hovenberg set up his Adirondack Electric Shop in the basement of the ‘Noble Block’ in 1917 after parting ways with the Lake Placid Club.

**14. 2511 Main Street**

The former Masonic Temple, completed in 1916, was designed by Lake Placid architect Floyd Brewster who also designed the NBT Bank building. The original cost of the building was \$30,000. The Masonic Temple rooms were on the upper floor. The Lake Placid Post Office was in this building for 20 years from 1916 to 1936.



**15. 2520 Main Street**

Built in 1927, the hotel now called the Northwoods Inn was originally the Lake Placid Marcy, the village’s first “fireproof “ (i.e. brick) hotel. It survived a major fire in 1966.

**16. 2501 Main Street - The Market**

Originally the Shea Building, this structure was built in 1900 by James Shea four years after he started the Shea’s Market business. Destroyed by fire December 15, 1933, The store re-opened on this site May 24, 1934. In 1988 it became The Market.

**17. 2495 Main Street - The Guild Block** (pronounced guy-ld)

This handsome building was erected by Forrest Guild in 1916 and was occupied by his exclusive men’s store for a good many years. This is one of the most architecturally elaborate and best preserved commercial buildings on Main Street.

**18. 2487 Main Street - Smoke Signals**

This building started out as the first Catholic Church in Lake Placid, St. Agnes Church #1, built in 1896 by John Shea. In 1988 this building became the Lake Placid Hardware and in 2006 the current Ben & Jerry’s Scoop Shop moved into the lefthand storefront and in 2013, Smoke Signals Restaurant opened on the right.

**19. 2483 Main Street - NBT Bank**

The first bank building in Lake Placid, it has been continuously occupied by the former Bank of Lake Placid. It was designed by architect Floyd Brewster of Lake Placid in 1915 and completed in 1916. An historic renovation in 2012 returned some original features of the building.



**20. 2471 Main Street -Lake Placid Public Library**

Built in 1886, the Lake Placid Public Library is one of the early libraries in the Adirondacks. This gracious little structure survives intact, with improvements such as enclosure of porches in 1941 and a 3-story extension in 2000. Step inside and take in the beautiful view of Mirror Lake and the Sentinel Mountain Range.

**21. 2450 Main St. -St. Eustace Church Episcopal Church** was erected on this site in 1927. However, it was originally built in 1900 as St. Eustace-by-the-Lakes Church on Mirror Lake Drive. In 1927, the building was dismantled, each piece numbered, moved and reconstructed on this site where the St. Eustace rectory already stood

**22. Mid’s Park**

The Lake Placid Sinfonietta and the summer concert series Songs at Mirror Lake are held here each summer, as well as with many other activities.

**23. 2432 Main Street - Palace Theater**

The Palace Theater was built by the Adirondack Theater Corporation in 1926. It has been in continuous operation as a theater ever since. The building, which contains dressing rooms backstage and an orchestra pit, was used for silent films and live performances in its earliest years. In the 1930s after the introduction of sound movies, the painted ceiling panels, which reportedly depict angels, were covered with a composition material to improve acoustics. In 1960, the Palace was purchased by Reginald Clark, who continues to operate it today.

**24. 2427 Main Street - The Cheeseman Building**

This structure was built in 1901 for William F. Cheeseman, a photographer who conducted a novelty, souvenir and art shop at this location until 1924. This building figures prominently in all the early photos of Main Street.

**25. 77 Mirror Lake Dr. - Mirror Lake Inn**

Originally known as Mir-a-Lac and created from an old estate by the Wikoff family, the Mirror Lake Inn was first winterized for the 1932 Olympics. It was home to the first “rope-tow” for alpine skiing, housed dozens of world class figure skaters and has a lengthy and storied history. The present owners, the Weibrecht family, have renovated and maintain the four star hotel, having rebuilt the main structure following a devastating fire in the winter of 1988.



**26. Original Site of St. Eustace Church** - See #21. The current owners welcome the public to this lovely garden created within the old foundation. When the church was moved to its present location on Main St., the footprint was flipped to accommodate its location on the North side of the street, so the entrance was closer to the street.

**27. Interlaken Inn**

Originally built as a summer rental home. In 1944 it was converted into a bed and breakfast for lodging for well-to-do Jewish refugees from Germany. In 1969 it became a home for skaters in the summer and skiers in the winter. It is currently a first class Inn and restaurant.



**28 & 29. Homes along Stevens Road & site of The Stevens House Hotel** (also see the aerial photo to the right on side panel)

Many of the homes built around this neighborhood in the late 1800’s to mid 1900’s were a part of the compound belonging to the Stevens House, originally built in 1876 and known as the Excelsior House. Early photos of Lake Placid show this magnificent hotel sitting at the crest of what is known as “Signal Hill”. The old stone wall which formed the front drive of the hotel is still visible on the south side of Stevens Road just across the road and up the hill from St. Agnes Church.

**30. St. Agnes Church**

The original St. Agnes on Main Street became too small for the growing congregation during the late teens and ‘20’s of the twentieth century. Construction began on this new church in April 1925. The church was dedicated on August 16, 1925. Renovations were completed in 1950, 1999 and 2013. St. Agnes Parochial School, across the street, was dedicated in 1959.

**31. Hillcrest Avenue homes**

Following WWII, many homes in this neighborhood opened up as rooming houses catering to many German Jewish refugees who wished to escape city life for the summer.



**32. 101 Olympic Drive - Crowne Plaza Resort**

In this spot stood The Grand View Hotel - in 1922 it became Lake Placid’s first Jewish-owned hotel, breaking the Adirondacks’ notorious ethnic barrier. A haven for refugees of Hitler’s Third Reich during World War II, the Grand View closed in 1956. It was razed in 1961, making way for a Holiday Inn. The Grand View was one of the grandest hotels in the Village, and was well known for its spectacular ballroom, enjoyed by locals and hotel guests alike.

**33. 2583 Main Street** The Adirondack Community Church building was designed in 1922 and used by the congregation as early as 1925. A wooden Methodist-Episcopal church was built on this site in 1888 and appears in several of the earliest photographs of Main Street. It was the second house of worship within the borders of what would be the village of Lake Placid.

**34. Site of former Lake Placid Club Main Bldg** - The history of the sweeping properties of the former Lake Placid Club is extensive. Founded in 1895, The Club (as it was called locally) was open and active into the early 1980’s, when it fell into bankruptcy and a series of tragic fires finally took down the main building and a couple of others at different times. The Boat House building (#34a on map



- see photo at right) is one of several buildings still standing on the property, although most all have undergone extensive renovations to bring them to modern standards. The vast property is owned and being gradually developed by the Lussi family, who also own the Crowne Plaza Resort. The Boat House is now a restaurant and the Golf House is still an essential component of the golf courses. There are several historic books for reference if you are interested in the history of the Lake Placid Club. Visit the History Museum or the Lake Placid Public Library for more.

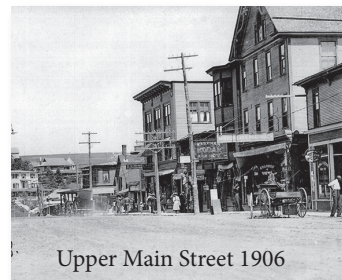
**35. Lake Placid Club Golf Courses**

The vast holdings of the LP Club property also included 45 holes of golf - two 18-hole and one 9-hole courses - which are still in full operation today, also under the ownership of the Lussi family. The most recent Club Golfhouse is still standing, however remodeled from its original, which was built in the 1960’s, and designed by noted local architect, Ronald Allwork.

**36. Lake Placid Club Stable**

Horseback riding was an integral part of life at the Lake Placid Club, with sleighs greeting guests at the train, along with recreational equestrian activities on extensive bridal trails across the vast Club property. In 1926 the Lake Placid Riding Club was formed. This early equestrian involvement was a precursor to the advent of the Lake Placid Horse Shows, which continue today for 3 weeks in early summer at the Lake Placid Showgrounds across from the Olympic Ski Jumps. Sadly, The Stable has fallen into disrepair.

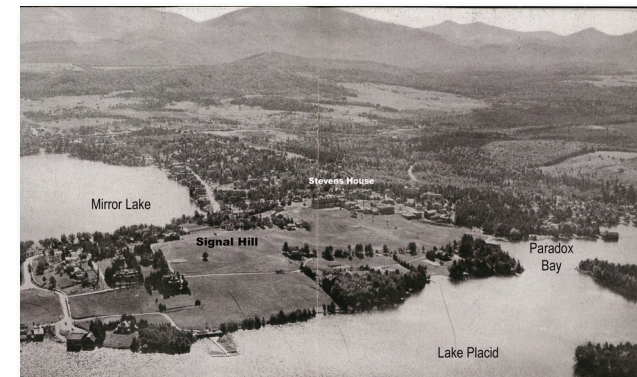
THERE ARE MANY MORE HISTORIC BUILDINGS  
THAN SPACE PERMITS.  
PLEASE VISIT THE HISTORY MUSEUM  
FOR MORE INFORMATION.



Upper Main Street 1906

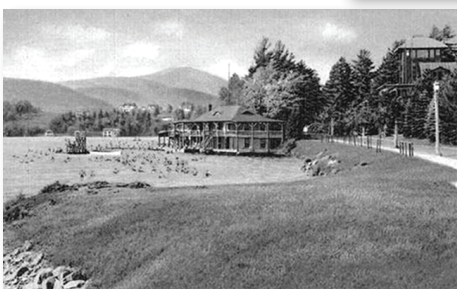


Interior 2427 Main (#23)  
The Cheeseman Bldg

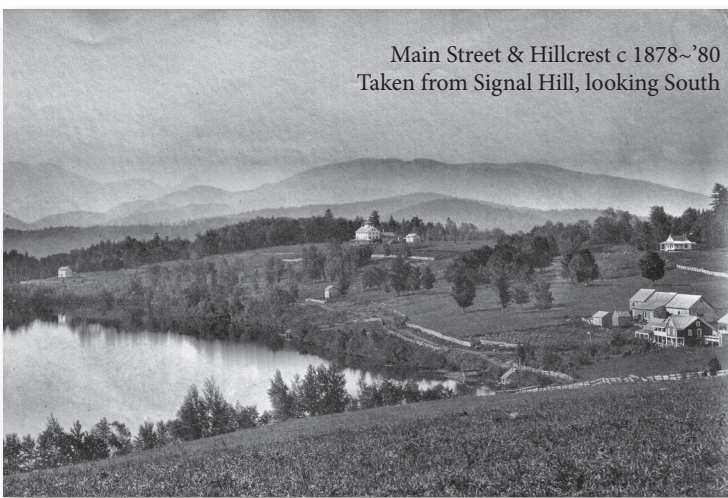


<--- The Homestead, site of the current High Peaks Resort, was owned and operated by the Roland family. In the late 1970’s, in anticipation of the Olympic Winter Games, it was razed to make way for a Hilton Hotel.

Main Street, dominated by the Marcy Hotel. Across the street is the Grand View Hotel(#32) beach The Grand View sat high on the hill behind the Olympic Arena, overlooking this area.



Lake Placid Club Boat House. The original main clubhouse (far upper right in photo) was located across the street from the Boat House. (see #34)



Main Street & Hillcrest c 1878~’80  
Taken from Signal Hill, looking South