

BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND RECREATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK (518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

UNIQUE SITE NO. 03347, 060607
QUAD _____
SERIES _____
NEG. NO. _____

①
L

YOUR NAME: Town of Harrietstown DATE: July 6, 1983

YOUR ADDRESS: 30 Main Street TELEPHONE: 891-1470

ORGANIZATION (if any): Historic Saranac Lake

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME(S): Harrietstown Town Hall
2. COUNTY: Franklin TOWN/CITY: Harrietstown VILLAGE: Saranac Lake
3. STREET LOCATION: 30 Main Street, Saranac Lake, New York 12983
4. OWNERSHIP: a. public b. private
5. PRESENT OWNER: Town of Harrietstown ADDRESS: 30 Main St, Saranac Lake
6. USE: Original: Town Hall Present: Town Hall
7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes No
Interior accessible: Explain Main floor accessible by step-free entrance and ramps leading to main floor offices.

*now 39 Main St ✓
2/9/2011*

DESCRIPTION

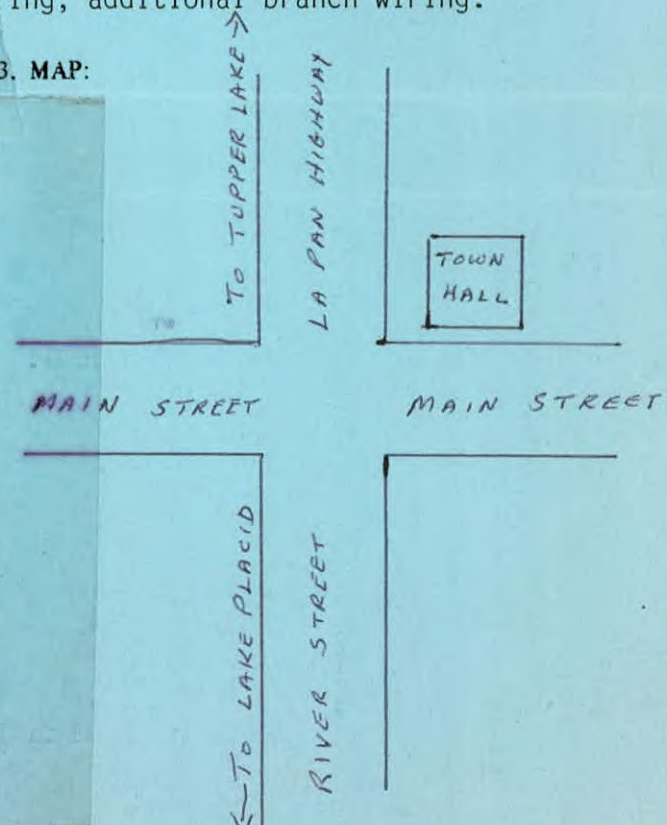
8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard b. stone c. brick d. board and batten
e. cobblestone f. shingles g. stucco other: _____
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: (if known) a. wood frame with interlocking joints
b. wood frame with light members
c. masonry load bearing walls
d. metal (explain) Steel I-Beam construction
e. other _____
10. CONDITION: a. excellent b. good c. fair d. deteriorated
11. INTEGRITY: a. original site b. moved if so, when? _____
c. list major alterations and dates (if known):
1970 - New Oil fired boiler
1981 - New main service wiring, additional branch wiring.

12. PHOTO:



HP-1

13. MAP:



14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known b. zoning c. roads
d. developers e. deterioration
f. other: _____

15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:
a. barn b. carriage house c. garage
d. privy e. shed f. greenhouse
g. shop h. gardens
i. landscape features: _____
j. other: _____

16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):
a. open land b. woodland
c. scattered buildings
d. densely built-up e. commercial
f. industrial g. residential
h. other: _____

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)
In the Berkeley Square Historic District.

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):
The Town Hall is modeled after Independence Hall. The front facade is like the center section of the Independence Hall's 3 building complex.

SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: 1927-1928

ARCHITECT: Scopes & Feustmann

BUILDER: _____

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

SEE ATTACHED.

21. SOURCES:

22. THEME: **Pioneer Health Resort**

12. Photo:

ATTACHMENT

Berkeley Square Historic District, Saranac Lake, N.Y.

Harrietstown Town Hall



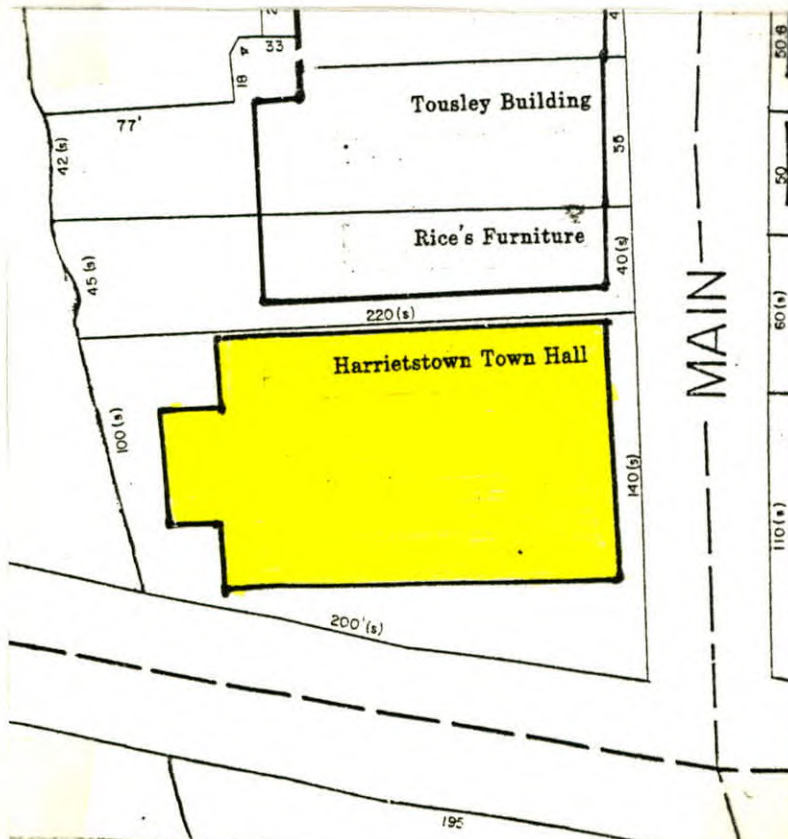
12. Photo: ATTACHMENT

Berkeley Square Historic District, Saranac Lake, N.Y.

Harrietstown Town Hall



13. Map:



HARRIETSTOWN TOWN HALL

Probably in 1881, Van Buren Miller, a grandson of one of Saranac Lake's founding fathers, Captain Pliny Miller, sold a 140 x 220 foot lot on Main Street opposite the foot of River Street. The price was a stunning \$1,000. The purchaser was the Town of Harrietstown.

The following year, the Town erected a cavernous, wooden structure with a somewhat ominous looking clocktower. This was the Old Town Hall. It came to be called such by burning to the ground in July, 1926. It was a spectacular and deadly fire. Three prisoners in the village "lock-up" were badly burned. No one else was in the building at the time. Phil Perry, Nicholas Pendergast, Thomas E. Daley, William F. Mulflur, Jr., John Crowley, and George Tcupin, members of the Saranac Club at the Empire Hotel next door, heard the cries of the trapped men and went to the rescue; but they could not open the cell doors, and by the time the Riverside Inn nightman James Egan, who knew the location of the jailer's keys, arrived on the scene, the place was an inferno. Joseph Shaw, George Hazard, and a man with the Gentry Brothers' Circus were pulled from the flames, but all were seriously injured. Shaw never recovered.

Two years later, a magnificent, "fireproof" structure stood on the same site. Designed by William H. Scopes and Maurice Feustman, it is their crowning achievement in Saranac Lake.

Both men came to the village to cure -- Scopes from Utica in 1899 and Feustman some years later. The two architects were quite different in temperament and in the state of their health, but they made a good team. Scopes & Feustman became one of Saranac Lake's two best and best known architectural firms, the other being Coulter & Westhoff which was continued by William G. Distin, Sr. and is now Wareham-DeLair.

Feustman was a quiet, slightly withdrawn, distinguished-looking man, slender and of medium height with a white goatee.

He was linked by the marriage of a sister to the Gimbel family which, with the Bloomingdales, the Sulzbergers and others founded the Knollwood complex of "cottages" on the north shore of Lower Saranac Lake.

Feustman was a highly cultured person. He received his training at École des Beaux Arts in Paris, and executed his designs with great care and a concern that the work be "finished" and not just completed. This care and concern in exquisitely illustrated by the home he built for himself and his wife, Grace, at 28 Catherine Street.

William Scopes was both a meticulously organized businessman and a highly energetic entrepreneur. While Feustman waged a difficult and eventually futile battle against tuberculosis, Scopes overcame his disease quickly. By the time he had been in Saranac Lake one year, he had designed two of the District's buildings.

One of Scopes & Feustman's early masterpieces was the Santanoni -- a five-story brick and stone building at 34 Church Street (severely damaged by fire in 1973) that offered the ultimate in luxury apartments for wealthy patients. The firm was responsible for many of the cottages and other buildings at Trudeau Sanatorium, including Ludington Infirmary and Trudeau Lab (as distinct from the Saranac Lab in the Church Street Historic District). Scopes & Feustman also designed a number of the "camps" on nearby lakes as well as many fine homes in the village and the Glenwood Estate Colony Development, one of the village's most elegant residential sections.

About the same time the new Town Hall was being built, Scopes was selling bonds for his (then) latest project -- the Hotel Saranac. Hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of these bonds were bought by virtually every business person in the community as well as many other individuals. When merchant Irving Altman bought one for \$500, then Adirondack National Bank president John Freer told him, "This is the best investment going." Some time later, Altman ran into Scopes on the street and asked, "Well, Bill, how's it going?" The architect put his hand over his head as though holding a rope, grimaced, and replied, "I'll have a noose around my neck till the day I die." With six hotels and numerous rooming-houses already operating in the village, there was really no market for the 100 rooms at the Saranac, no matter how modern they may have been. The hotel was a financial flop from the beginning, and it deeply embarrassed and nearly ruined its promoter.

Only a few years after Scopes died, the Saranac was taken over by the hotel management school of Paul Smith's College and, with considerable efforts on their part, has finally fulfilled John Freer's prediction. It is now the only hotel in the village, and, while it may not have made any monetary return to the original investors, its return in terms of its value to the community is considerable indeed.

While the Hotel Saranac was a tremendous disappointment to Scopes & Feustman, the Harrietstown Town Hall could only have been a source of pride. In fact, it is a symbol of the pride and aspirations of the town and village it was built to serve. It was erected when Saranac Lake was at the very pinnacle of its prosperity. Saranac Lake meant the best and, quite literally, last hope for thousands of people. It meant great opportunity for those who would provide goods, services, and all manner of support for those people.

Hope and opportunity, whether nobly or ignobly manifested, epitomized the spirit of the place. In its brick and steel and concrete, in its festoons and amphor and lanterns, in its columns and arches and dome, from the floor of its vast, vaulted hall to the twin deer and central spruce tree of its weather vane and in the tolling of its clock-tower bell, the Harrietstown Town Hall embodies this spirit.

by Phil Gallos

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ARCHITECTURE
FROM THE
ADIRONDACK FOOTHILLS

Folk and Designed Architecture
of Franklin County, New York

By Robert Harold McGowan

With photographs by Daniel Ferguson,
Nancy M. Hale, and James Wyman
and drawings by James Wyman
and James Darlington

Franklin County Historical
and Museum Society
Malone, New York 1977



Village of Saranac Lake /
Harrietstown Town Hall
Drawing by M. V. Cambarer

Built about 1929, the Harrietstown Town Hall recalls the Federal tendency within Colonial Revival architecture. Of course, in the early nineteenth century, Franklin County never had so elaborate a Federal style building as this. The architects, Scopes and Feustman, tried to bring all the dignity of Roman arches, urns, and festoons and all the authority of a church to bear on this steepled edifice. Ironically, the prosperity that enabled people to flock to Saranac Lake for summer vacations ended almost as soon as Harrietstown finished its civic monument.