

FUN FACT: HISTORY OF FAMILY & FATE

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A PORTAL OF LOVE, CONTEMPLATION AND REJUVENATION



Cathy and I were building our first web site in the mid 1990's. We had just bought the business from my family, first generation immigrants from Europe.

Recently married we were full of enthusiasm and ideas. We decided to create a historical section to our new site knowing that the Lodge had been built circa 1886. Traveling that beautiful fall

foliage day to the county courthouse to conduct our research, we remarked how we had been in and out of each other's lives beginning that first year my family moved to the Adirondacks.

Literally in the beginning of that year I had broken Cathy's arm by telling her a joke and as she laughed, she fell off the school slide. Cathy also had worked for my parents during high school.

A successful occupational therapist in Washington D.C. that would eventually be the basis of her health and wellness culinary philosophy, Cathy had literally showed up on my father's birthday when the decision had been made to sell the business based on his health.

Several years back I had been selected as the founding director of an Adirondack Park economic center and while I wanted to help continue the family business, I had become very interested in developing a sustainable development agenda for the Park. Having an interest in the culinary side of health and wellness foods, Cathy wanted to learn old world natural traditions and a deal was struck for her to be under the tutelage of my parents.

These were not easy times as they often are in the transition period of a family business but Cathy and my parents were united in the common goal of providing a quality based, holistic and personable experience. I of course, attempted to run hard the other way with my sustainable development career that would eventually be my occupation for over 22 years. Despite my initial interest in those early years to go back to Europe and my dream job of working for the World Bank which had led me to postgraduate studies, the powerful hand of fate interceded. Cathy and I were married and we became rooted to what we call the Adirondack spirit.

Fate and love are a powerful combination and on that fall day in the county courthouse we met it face-to-face with a result that was almost beyond reality.

Completely unknown to us until that fateful day was the fact that Cathy's family had originally built the Lodge in 1886.

We and the Lodge had come full circle. The result of destiny's energy is that now the fourth-generation sparks our sense of place that we believe is a portal of love, contemplation and rejuvenation. How else could you explain all of this?!

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THE CREATION OF A SENSE OF PLACE



The historical significance of our Lake Clear Lodge is a unique story of not only its importance as part of a strategic commerce point in the opening of the Adirondacks, but as a powerful symbol of family, fate and hope.

In the early Adirondack history our Great Woods were only accessible by Indian trails and water routes. Water routes played a significant role in the Adirondacks due to the number of waterways. In the St. Regis Wilderness region which Lake Clear is in the window of, there are 58 bodies of water in the Northeast quadrant of the 6 million acre Adirondack Park on the Adirondack scenic-by-way of the Adirondack Trail Route 30.

However, accessibility beyond the most ardent outdoor enthusiast did not occur in large numbers until the development of the Adirondack railroad. One of the main lines connecting New York City with the Adirondacks had a key junction in Lake Clear from where you could connect to Paul Smiths; Malone and Canada; Saranac Lake and Lake Placid and return to Old Forge, Utica and New York City. The Adirondacks scenic beauty and the railroad created the heyday of the grand Adirondack Hotels and Great Camps. Among these were the estates of the Rockefellers the Post Camp Topridge of Post cereal fame and prominent early Adirondack hotels like Paul Smiths Hotel which laid the foundation to Paul Smiths College and the immense Saranac Inn Hotel that served as a playground for the rich and famous. Lake Clear in the midst of this activity became a small commerce hub and here the story of history blends with fate, family and love. Our Adirondack resort and retreat is one of the last of its kind.

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THE CATHY FISHER (OTIS) HOHMEYER PATH: A 100 YEAR CIRCLE & 100 MILE LOCAL CULINARY TRADITION

The Lodge was built circa 1886 as a trading post and post office. The original building was built by Cathy Hohmeyer's great aunt and uncle known as the Otis family. The Lodge was then quickly expanded to an inn and an Adirondack hotel, and served as a stage coach stop before and after the completion of the railroad. Thus, Cathy has a long tradition of being involved in Adirondack pioneering hospitality heritage. But the story gets even better. On her father's side, the Fisher family came from Germany in the 1800's and had a background in Old world traditions, similar to Ernest's first generation European family. The Fisher's though were connected to Miles Standish of Mayflower fame.



As part of our rehabilitation project when we redid the roof, I discovered a wooden basket of certified mail receipts dating back to 1886. Cathy's family sold the building to the Jarvis family in the early 1900's that expanded both the property and the tourism amenities. The Jarvis families were quite the land barons and at one time owned a large portion of Lake Clear. Many of the current facilities you see today were built by the Jarvis's with a few notable exceptions. As farming and wood products were key industries in the Adirondacks in the 1800's, it is interesting to see many of the old pictures and how open the land was around the Lake at one time.

The other phenomenon was that the major road route was built to follow the railroad line. As these were put in place after many of the properties were in place they often dissected property lines. Our current 25-acre estate is

no different as the original highway (now abandoned) and the railroad line (also abandoned but efforts are underway to revive the line as a tourism train and it serves as a recreational trail in the winter) go through the property. The main highway you travel on today was built in the 1950's so when you come into the Lodge estate you enter what is the back of the property as the main building faced the old highway, the railroad tracks and the lake. The main lodge was added on several times in its history with the last addition added circa 1940-50's.

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THE HOHMEYER FAMILY & THE ADIRONDACK ALPS: FATE FROM THE BEGINNING

The Hohmeyer family bought the Lodge in 1965 and began operating it on my father's birthday May 28th, 1966.



Unfortunately for my parents, the Lodge had ceased operating since the 1950's and had not been winterized. When we moved in 4 days before Christmas in 1965, there was no heat or hot water and our entire family of five ate and slept in what is still the lobby area. I remember my mother taking pots to get snow outside so that we could boil the water to cook and bath. It was quite the restoration project. My family expanded the operation to make it a four-season destination and revitalized the four cabins as well. My family was involved in the farming and food industries dating back to medieval times ("Hoh - meyer" translated as "overseer of the manor"). With me as the only exception, my entire family was born in Europe. We moved to the Adirondacks when I was six years old and one of the first people I met in school was Cathy and the story becomes truly one of fate. My introduction to Cathy was on the school playground. As she was sitting on the top of the slide, I told her this elementary school version of marriage - you remember the one of when it's red you do and

when it's white you do not - and she promptly fell off the slide and broke her wrist. We did not speak for ages after that and with one notable exception our next encounter was when she worked for my parents during high school. Years later we had both come home to care for ailing parents. At the time, I was in postgraduate school and we had the place about to be placed under contract for sale. Literally on my father's birthday, fate struck its hand again. I had been selected to be the founding director of an Adirondack sustainable development agency. While we were all mulling over our options, Cathy appears and became interested in leasing the facility. All of us decided to take a six-month trial period. I would accept this career opportunity, my parents would hold off selling and Cathy would operate the business. In 1990, we collectively took on the first Lodge expansion project together by adding two beautiful handcrafted chalets designed by Cathy's father who had operated the Saranac Inn sawmill and was a true craftsman. In 1994, Cathy and I now married, bought the adjacent lake property and created lakeside vacation rentals. There is not one item we have left untouched from infrastructure to rehabilitation to recapture the "Great Camp" style estate that has marked the property for over 120 years. Today, the Lake Clear Lodge & Retreat is one of the last original estates still open to the public. With a European and Adirondack pioneer influence it appears sometimes that we are back in the 1800's especially as Lake Clear, NYS 28th largest lake has no public boat access and the serene quietness of the lake you can still clearly hear the loons. By keeping the traditional "guesthouse" tradition alive by taking no more than 50 culinary enthusiasts an evening with no second seating so that you can have your table the entire evening if you wish, time is timeless. With simmering stocks based on both family's culinary traditions, Cathy and I have fused these Old World and Adirondack blends to create our own unique fusion cuisine entitled The Adirondack Alps.

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THE LAKE CLEAR LODGE & RETREAT is a member of the [American Historic Inns](#) and [Green Hotel Association](#).

While those are the amenities, the main Lodge has been home for 4 generations of our family. We sleep as a family here, we eat as a family, we share dreams, we discuss our differences, we cry, but most importantly we love here. It is why the Adirondack Alps experience at the Lake Clear Lodge & Retreat is so personable and caring - we treat you as if you are in our home as this is our home!