

North Creek Railway Depot Museum Newsletter Spring/Summer 2025 *President's Message*



A Milestone Year for the Depot Museum

Our 25th Anniversary year, is off to a fast start!

Having served on the North Creek Railway Depot Museum Board for the past few years, I was honored to be elected president by my fellow trustees.

I begin this role with deep appreciation for the strong fiscal and programmatic foundation built by past presidents Ellen Schaefer (2018-2022) and Gregory Schaefer (2023-2024). Their dedication continues to guide our success, and for that, I am most grateful.

We launched the year with our first exhibit, “Ride Up-Slide Down: The Early Days of Skiing in North Creek, 1920s to 1940s,” at the Tannery Pond Center in January. The exhibit was well-received and provided the perfect backdrop for our Old Ski Movie Night in February. That event drew over 100 attendees and raised more than \$1,300 for our education program. Thank you to all who attended, donated, and purchased raffle tickets—your support makes a real difference!

If you’ve visited our website recently (<https://northcreekdepotmuseum.org/>), you may have noticed some exciting updates. We’ve added links to our social media platforms, along with a new photo gallery featuring images from past and recent events. These upgrades will help keep members and friends in the loop—and there’s more to come!

With the Museum reopening on **Memorial Day Weekend**, visitors can look forward to receiving our beautifully redesigned brochure, featuring fresh imagery and a historic timeline highlighting key moments in the history of our station. We can't wait for you to see it!

This year and next mark two seminal anniversaries:

Our 25th Anniversary will be celebrated in **mid-July** with a festive birthday party featuring cake, ice cream, soft drinks, guest speakers, and live music. We’ll be inviting the entire North Creek community to join in the fun. Stay tuned for full details later this spring.

The **125th Anniversary of TR’s “Night Ride to the Presidency”** will be celebrated throughout **2026** with a year-long series of events and activities to mark this nationally significant moment.

As you may recall, on **September 14, 1901**, Theodore Roosevelt—vacationing with his family near Mount Marcy—was urgently called to Buffalo as President McKinley lay dying from an assassination attempt. That morning, Roosevelt stepped onto our depot platform and received the telegram notifying him of McKinley's death. A special train awaited to take him to Buffalo, where he was sworn in as president later that day.

To commemorate this historic event, a special planning committee has been formed, composed of historical societies, museums, and civic and community leaders from across the Adirondacks. Our first meeting was held on February 20, and enthusiasm is already building for a full year of commemorative events in 2026.

Thank you for your continued support—and here’s to an exciting and meaningful anniversary year(s) ahead!

Tony



Depot Museum's "Ride Up-Slide Down Exhibit"

This January and February, visitors to North Creek looking to come in from the cold had the opportunity to visit an exhibit featuring highlights from the Museum's extensive collection of skiing-related art, artifacts, and archival documents. The exhibit, entitled "Ride Up-Slide Down: The Early Days of Skiing in North Creek, 1920s to 1940s," was staged at Tannery Pond, which also hosted screenings of some of the Museum's wonderful old ski movies.

Among those enjoying the exhibit were fifth grade Johnsburg students, whose field trip was a culminating activity carried out through our LARAC (Lower Adirondack Regional Art Council) Education Grant and the Depot's educational program. Board



A visitor checks out one of the Museum's vintage ski posters, which were on display at the Tannery Pond Center this winter.



Board member Joe Elliott shows off some of the many items that were raffled off during the Depot's Old Ski Movie Night.

members Linda Quintavalle and Robert Engel were on hand to lead tours for the young learners, who peppered their guides with questions. Students competed for prizes in a ski clothing design contest before enjoying a pizza party.

Thank you to Tannery Pond, to the many local businesses and community groups that donated items for our fund-raising raffle, and to all who toured the exhibit and/or bought a ticket to view our ski films!

Please Help Us Continue Our Mission

The North Creek Railway Depot Preservation Association is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, and a New York State Registered Charitable Organization. Your tax-deductible donations are gratefully accepted and help us to keep the Museum open and working to fulfill our Mission to "collect, preserve, and interpret objects related to the history and culture of the Gore Mountain Region". Increases in the cost of fuel oil and maintenance of our historic buildings puts a strain on our operating budget. Please consider a membership or additional donation if you are already a member. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Thank you.



Have a few hours to spare? Like meeting new people? Consider joining us as a volunteer at the Depot Museum. Many opportunities exist to serve as a docent, help with an event, or join a work crew to help us keep the Museum up and running. For more information email director@northcreekdepotmuseum.com or call Ellen at 518-251-5451.

In Memoriam

Helen Miner (1939 – 2024) The North Creek Depot Museum sadly announces the death of Helen Miner, who passed away on December 26, 2024, at her home in Cary, North Carolina. Helen was a very active member of every community in which she lived. In addition to volunteering on the Board of the North Creek Railway Depot Preservation Association for many years, she served on the Board of the Depot Museum, including eight years as Board president. We are extremely grateful for Helen's years of service to our Museum and extend our sincere condolences to her family. To read Helen's full obituary, please visit the following link:

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/newsobserver/name/helen-miner-obituary?id=57117013>

Joyce Tuttle (1948-2025)

We are sad to announce the death of Joyce Tuttle, who passed away on February 17. Joyce had a strong commitment to volunteering. After moving to North Creek, she became involved with the North Creek Railroad Depot Preservation Association, serving as a valued member of the Board and as a volunteer docent. She also gave back to her community by volunteering with the Johnsbury Ambulance Corps, the North Warren Ambulance Corps, and the North Creek Volunteer Fire Department support team. She always maintained her interest in the Museum and would occasionally stop in to visit. Joyce will be missed by the Johnsbury community. Joyce's obituary can be found at the following link: <https://bit.ly/JoyceTuttle>.

Raymond Flanigan (1938-2025) August 18, 1938 - March 6, 20

The North Creek Railway Depot Museum sadly acknowledges the death of Raymond (Ray) Flanigan, a former Board member and treasurer of the Board. Ray, who passed away on March 6, 2025, thoroughly enjoyed his work with the Museum and was a valuable asset to the Board for many years. He was also a dedicated docent for the Museum, sharing his interest in local history with visitors. The Board of Directors extends our deepest condolences to Ray's family. To read his obituary, please visit <https://bit.ly/RayFlanigan>.

Roger King Glenn (1938-2025)

Roger Glenn, a friend of the Museum and a booster of local ski patrols, passed away on January 22. Growing up in North Creek, Roger was an avid skier. He joined the National Ski Patrol in 1968 and over the years served as a First Aid instructor and examiner, section chief, and regional director. In 1982 he was awarded one of the National Ski Patrol's highest honors, a national number. Roger was the son of Dr. James A. Glenn, who in the 1930s invented a wooden splint box that could be placed around an injured skier's boot and trousers, making it easier to transport him or her off the mountain. An example of the splint is on display in the Museum's Ski Gallery. To view his obituary, please visit <https://bit.ly/RogerGlenn>.

If you would like to make a donation in memory of any of these wonderful people, you may do so by scanning the bar code here or visiting www.northcreekdepotmuseum.org





25th Anniversary Birthday Bash

Saturday, July 12, 2025

1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Save the date! On July 12, the Depot will host an open house and free birthday party for community members, visitors, and volunteers to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the opening of the North Creek Railway Depot Museum. Our Depot Birthday Bash will feature live music and costumed characters, plus cake, ice cream, beverages, and assorted treats to share. We hope to use the occasion to honor some of the Museum's early tenacious, resourceful volunteers, like Bill Bibby, Sterling Goodspeed, Mary Moro, Bert and Helen Miner, Rosemary Miner Pelkey, Patricia Jordan, William Thomas, Bob Zilch, Sally Heinrich, Rob Holford, Marion Morse, Cindy Morse, and Cathy Atherden, who had the vision to purchase, repair, and restore the original station, which was built in 1872. They established a nonprofit organization and raised the funds to bring the Depot back to life. As the saying goes, "a picture is worth a thousand words." The photos below show their extraordinary task and the extent of their accomplishments. In the past 25 years, the Depot has welcomed thousands of visitors and continues the mission of preservation and education. Bring your family and friends and help us rejoice in their foresight and success!



LARAC Continues Support for Depot's Education

Once again, LARAC (the Lower Adirondack Regional Arts Council) is supporting our unique arts and education program, "People and Trains That Could." The Council's generous funding allows us to expand our partnership with the Johnsburg Central School District and increases our ability to present classes that feature history, literature, art, music, and theater for students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 6. This year's plan is to develop several new lessons focusing on skiing and the expansion of the railroad. History lives!

This project is made possible with funds for the Statewide Community Regrant Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council of the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by the Lower Adirondack Regional Arts Council.

Recent Acquisitions

The Depot Museum was recently given a collection of books and ski equipment from David Delozier. The ski gear (circa 1965) represents the state of the art of the day: Kneissl Diplomat skis with a first-generation P-Tex base, first-generation Marker release bindings with the cable, and first-generation Rieker buckle boots.

The books date from the 1940s to the 1960s. They include biographies of early skiers, races, instructors, and resorts as they developed. Of particular interest is information on the 10th Mountain Division from World War II. There are also early ski magazines with information about skiing around the world. The collection is a great addition to the Museum, and we are grateful for this generous gift!

New York State's First Rope Tow

By Greg Schaefer

The Schaefer family started visiting the Adirondacks in the early 1920s to find relief for the asthma symptoms of Rose Schaefer, mother of Carl Schaefer. The family enjoyed outdoor activities of all kinds, including snow sports. Carl Schaefer joined the American Legion group that explored the old logging roads on Gore with a view towards clearing them for ski trails.



Greg Schaefer, vice president of the Depot Board, is working on a display of an early rope tow from the region.

As a member of the Schenectady Wintersports Club, he was one of the 378 skiers on the first Snow Train to North Creek on March 4, 1934. His friend and mentor William (Bill) Gluesing of General Electric's "House of Magic" fame took 16mm films of Snow Trains and early skiing. He coined the phrase "Ride Up-Slide Down" to describe the experience of skiers taking buses, trucks, and cars to the Barton Garnet Mine before skiing back to town.

In 1935, Bill gave Carl \$100 to build a rope tow in the McMahon Ski Bowl. With the help of his friend Gene Morehouse and the Alexander Garage, Carl converted a 1929 Buick to pull skiers up the hill for the 1935-1936 season. Skiers no longer had to negotiate a five-mile downhill run to enjoy a day of skiing. This was the first rope tow in New York State, and the second in the Northeast. Carl also started the North Creek Ski School, the first in the area.

The following season, Carl moved his rope tow to the property he had purchased and created the "Skiland" ski area, located near the future Gore Mountain Ski Center. He had a rope tow, skating rink, ski jump, toboggan run, and youth hostel. He operated the area for several years before returning to Schenectady to raise his family.

Other rope tows proliferated in the North Creek area. Emmett Higgins and Burt "Bucky" Burns built a new tow at the Ski Bowl to replace the Schaefer tow. Others included Straight's, Barton's, and the Log House tows in North River, and the White Horse in Wevertown. The inexpensive uphill lifts proved very popular, and added another dimension to the "Ride Up-Slide Down" activities in North Creek.



Margaret Cunningham is pictured using the first rope tow in New York State.

Historical Spotlight: When the Depot Served as a Gateway to the American Wilderness By Robert Engel

When the tracks arrived and the still-incomplete train depot opened in 1871, North Creek became a portal for America's growing fascination with wilderness. Millions of unmapped acres could suddenly be reached in a day or two from New York, Boston, and Philadelphia.

The great American frontier—the ever-moving line between what was civilized and what remained wild—was a challenge and a threat. It shaped our character as a nation. In the 1870s, the yet-unnamed “Gilded Age” became nostalgic for the frontier as it faded in the distance.



"Martin," shouted I, "hang on; that's your deer. I quit all claim to him."

Romantic writers and Hudson River School artists described the wild American landscape as a source for self-discovery and spiritual repose. This was an intellectual about-face and was one of the most compelling and influential ideas of the 19th Century. It was also an opportunity for ambitious men of society to show they could step off the pavement and bring back a buck.

North Creek was the terminus for the relative safety and comfort of Thomas Durant's new Adirondack line. Here, stepping off the train next to what the map insisted was the Hudson River, this

remote village would be your embarkation point for the perils and possibilities of the dark forest.

But that's ok. You geared up at Brooks Brothers, the guide you hired must be around here somewhere, and you just finished reading *The Last of the Mohicans* on the train. You got this.

As industry surged and workers relocated en masse to the factories, the 1870 census proclaimed that for the first time the majority of northeasterners lived in a city. Immigration was encouraged, and the population of America's oldest cities quickly tripled. The owners and managers also lived nearby, only in different neighborhoods. For them to be recognized as “sporting gentlemen,” they first needed to pass through North Creek.

By the end of the 1870s, Thomas Durant established transportation infrastructure via stagecoach and steamboat to Blue Mountain and Raquette Lakes.

Durant's nephew Frederick opened the Prospect House on Blue Mountain Lake, described as the most fashionable mountain hotel in the U.S. When the North Creek Depot opened, the lake hadn't been properly surveyed or officially named. This was remote country. (The author has a copy of Verplanck Colvin's 1875 BML survey map on his wall. It's amusing how inaccurate it is.)

Also in the 1870s, Durant's son William built the first great camp, Pine Knot on Raquette Lake, which was followed by a host of others. He arguably invented Adirondack architecture, now emulated around the world.

None of this would have happened without the North Creek Railway Depot.

The above illustration of an amateur in the woods is from an 1869 edition of "Adventures in the Wilderness" by W.H.H. Murray.