

CAMP

THE MAGIC OF ADIRONDACK GETAWAYS

SWEET

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CARRIE MARIE BURR

CAMP



The Richards family's dog, Bailey, at Tason Kiwi, their camp in Old Forge (see page 34).



THE BIG HOUSE

SINCE 1949

Seventy years ago, four girls—two sisters and their best friends—left Queens, New York, for a trip to Uncle Charlie’s house in Friends Lake. Late at night and lost, they ended up at the Cox family’s house. Those girls almost didn’t make it to Uncle Charlie’s, down the road: The Coxes had welcomed the young ladies like family, for a week entertaining them and touring them around the lake.

The girls and the Coxes stayed in touch. So in 1960, when the Coxes could no longer keep their Friends Lake property—which included another house by the lake (several barns and a grand old home that had been a stop on the Underground Railroad were added later)—the parents of the sisters who had found such kindness in Friends Lake bought the place.

Under the Schwalbachs, the spirit of the Big House never left. Here, their family could

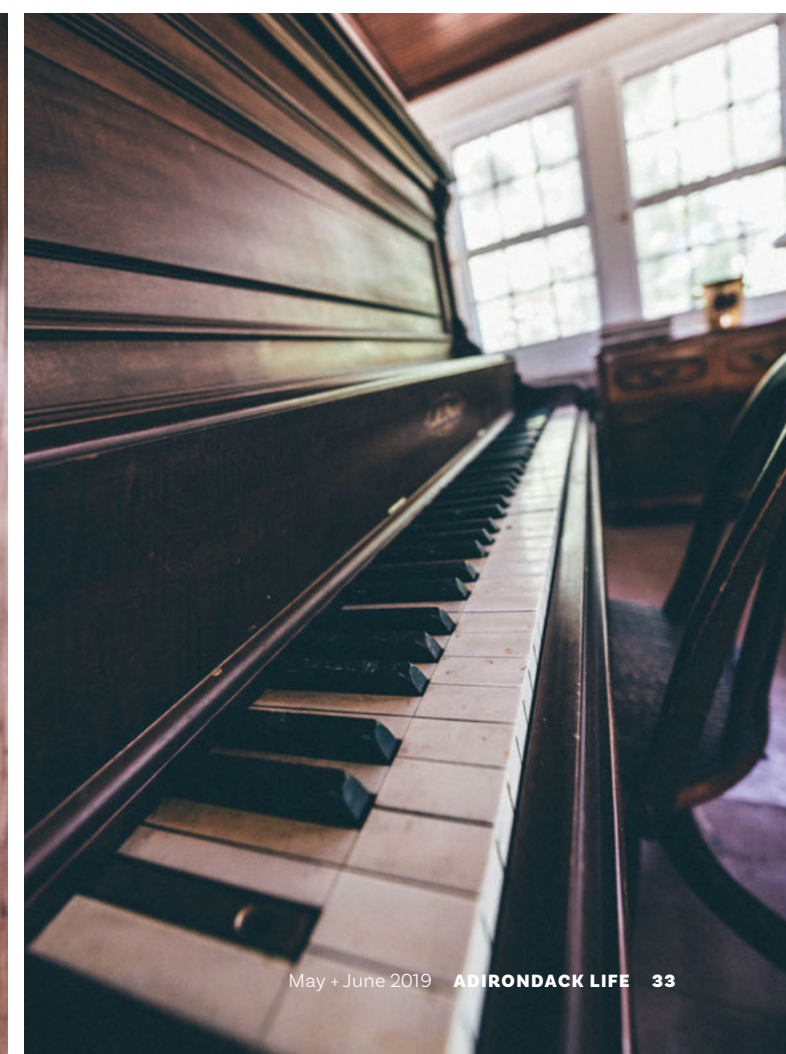
escape the heat of the city to a house surrounded by pines and cool water. My mom, Gloria, was one of those sisters who first felt this place’s magic in 1949. Eventually, she was bringing her children to Friends Lake.

The day that school was out for summer, my four sisters and I were loaded into the family car for the trip up the New York State Thruway and Route 9. We stayed until the day after Labor Day, when we cried all the way home. The place continues to hold our hearts and memories—it’s always been there for us. Swimming, water-skiing, fishing, horse-back riding and, in winter, skiing at Gore. Lifelong friendships, marriages, babies. One of those babies used the house to study—successfully!—for the New York State Bar Exam. We think the house had something to do with it.

The girls, in turn, knew that the Big House needed them. In 2013 renovations began to restore the house to its original glory, to ensure it’ll be there to welcome future generations just as it had all those years ago when four young women made that fateful trip from Queens.

—Carol Timpone

ABOVE: Descendants of Gloria Schwalbach Seitz at the Big House. BELOW: Gloria in the Coxes’ boat on Friends Lake in 1949. The Big House’s living room, as it was 70 years ago. FACING PAGE: Gloria and her daughter Marion. The family’s property was once a stop on the Underground Railroad and, later, a hub for rumrunners during Prohibition.





TASON KIWI

SINCE THE EARLY 1950s



In a lean-to about 20 yards from my Aunt Bridget and Uncle Tom's cabin in Old Forge, there are names etched in fading chalk on the walls: Joe, Chris, Everett, Kayla, Katie and Meghan—cousins, nieces, nephews, and the daughter of Bridget and Tom, all who've visited here. There's my name, too, because I've come to this camp every summer for as long as I can remember.

When you visit, as soon as you turn up the camp's driveway that leads into dense woods, you feel as though you've entered another world. There are fire pits for s'mores beneath the stars and an enormous deck overlooking the Fulton Chain of Lakes, where you can watch the party barges cruise between First and Fourth Lakes.

This cabin was originally built in 1929, but has been in the family since the early 1950s. Inside Tason Kiwi, as my relatives call the camp—supposedly meaning "House on a Hill" in a Native American dialect—a long wooden table and benches serve as a meeting place for meals. A rattlesnake skin tacked to a wall, and a shoulder mount of a boar, its tusks now used as hat

hangers, came with the place. But through the decades, our family has collected board games and books about the region's history. There's also a closet-sized kitchenette, an attic where, as kids, we'd pretend to send signals to distant countries with walkie-talkies, and a television with a rabbit-ear antenna because you don't travel here to stare at a screen, anyway.

Behind Tason Kiwi there's a spot we've always called "The Rock." The boulder sits on the precipice of a steep drop. As soon as we arrive at camp, once the groceries and overnight bags are brought up from the cars, we stand there, holding our walking sticks that we cut from nearby dead trees, and look into the lush greenery below, knowing we've arrived, for at least one more year, at a place that feels both like heaven and home.

—Rick Bach

ABOVE: Bridget and Tom Richards at their Old Forge camp, where they've hosted—and created—a generation of Adirondack-lovers. FACING PAGE: Rick Bach with the latest in an annual Tason Kiwi tradition of finding a dead tree limb on the property and carving it into a walking stick.





CEDAR CREST CAMP

SINCE 1899

If my great-grandmother hadn't contracted tuberculosis, I would not be sitting here right now, fire in the woodstove, feeling the warmth of family history in our Ruby Mountain piece of heaven, Gore Mountain looming in the distance.

In the 1890s, my great-grandparents Carrie and Isaac Allen came to North River from Long Island to breathe cool, clean air. They had an immediate love for these mountains. The story goes that they agreed if they survived, they'd buy property in the area. In 1899 they purchased an acre, built a two-room structure and called it Cedar Crest Camp.

Over the years, additions were added, family grew. I was a baby when I first came here and I haven't missed a summer at Cedar Crest since. (I like to tell my kids that I have pine sap flow-

ing through my veins.) I have fond memories of birthdays, playing cards and Parcheesi, and using an outhouse right up through the 1960s.

Then, as Mother Nature tends to do, she began to reclaim her territory, compromising the camp. So in 1990 we replaced the original Cedar Crest with a new log camp in the exact same spot.

I come to camp from my home in Rochester, New York, every few weeks; in summer I'm here with my family as much as possible. Someday my wife, Cindy, and I hope to retire here.

In the meantime, the memories continue. Last summer, as a new father himself, my son, Justin, was on the front deck, looking out over the same mountains that had given his great-great-grandparents so much happiness. He was overheard talking to his 10-month-old son, John, as he held him in his arms. He said, "Now, John, this is an important place. You're the sixth generation to come here. I hope you love it as much as I do."

—Allen Merrifield

ABOVE: Allen Merrifield, center, with his family at their North River camp. BELOW: Allen's 94-year-old Uncle Frank, with a photo of himself, age 14, at Cedar Crest. The camp's Wall of Fame, where every visitor is memorialized. FACING PAGE: Scenes from Cedar Crest. Hudson, the Merrifields' Labrador retriever.

