

RITA WONG & CHRIS COHAN



Lady Tree Lodge Upper Saranac Lake, Franklin County

Built in 1896 for Texas newspaperman Alfred Belo, a former colonel in the Confederate Army, Lady Tree Lodge was originally called "Lone Star." It is one of a small collection of camps that were constructed around the Saranac Inn, a large, luxurious hotel on the north end of Upper Saranac Lake. Alfred Belo died in 1901, although his family continued to vacation here. During the summers of 1907 and 1908, newspapers report that New York Governor (and later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and 1916 Republican

presidential candidate) Charles Evans Hughes and his family occupied the house, referred to as Rustic Cabin at the time. The Saranac Inn, which burned in 1978, and the camps associated with it were the center of summer life and the social scene on the lake for many decades.

The 1890s through the early 1900s saw a building boom on Upper Saranac Lake, including Moss Ledge, Eagle Island and other great camps. Lady Tree Lodge is typical of the "rustic" Adirondack architecture of the time, and features four fireplaces, original square and diamond mullion windows, beadboard throughout, and house-length, deep porches with ornate log screening. Its windows, log siding and elaborate screening are similar in style to camps designed by William Coulter.



When Chris Cohan, a landscape architect; Jennifer Swain, his sister; and Rita Wong, an architect who worked for the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, purchased Lady Tree Lodge in 2013 it had satellite dishes attached to the house, added stairways, broken down porch railings, undersized roof supports, exposed plumbing and electrical conduit, and trees growing against it. But Lady Tree is one of the oldest remaining structures on the lake and has one of its best views. So they bought it and took on the major, two-years-long restoration project, fueled by Rita's extensive research to find photographs and original architectural drawings.

Every window needed repairing, and many of the 1,712 glass panes needed reglazing. The beadboard paneling, one of its most striking interior features, was painstakingly cleaned. Today the walls glow with the richness of the original wood, and the house is flooded with shadows and light. Extensive repairs were made to the porches and railings and to the log-lattice screen across the house front. The boathouse was also rebuilt with new floors and roof.

As Chris explained in an article he wrote about Lady Tree Lodge and its restoration, "It has been rebuilt to last another 125 years," and, as you can see, with the care and craftsmanship of the original.

*For more information about **Lady Tree Lodge**, read Chris Cohan's article in the Rye Record: <http://ryerecord.com/home-garden/rebuilt-to-last-another-125-years.html>*