

# ALFHEIM LODGE

*Alfheim*--"Home of the Elves" in old Norse mythology

## Valhalla Highlands

*Valhalla* --"Paradise for heroes" in old Norse mythology

Cold Spring, New York



From 1940, the year I was born, to 1997, my family maintained a summer lodge at Valhalla Highlands, a rustic lake community in the North Highland area near the Village of Cold Spring, New York, 55 miles north of New York City. My time spent at Valhalla with my parents, sisters Carole and Phyllis and summertime friends roaming the trails, camping in the forest, swimming, sailing and fishing in Lake Valhalla and playing tennis, shuffleboard and softball was the antithesis of the noisy, dangerous, confined-to-the-inside New York City winters. The lodge was my first love affair with a house; it foreshadowed my life as a restoration architect.

For many years I pursued a return to the Valhalla, my interest being one of the early twentieth century lodges with a view of the Lake, surrounded by woods but still part of the community. Eventually it became apparent that my pursuit could be achieved through one of the very few lodges not originally built as part of the community which could be reinterpreted to correspond to the lodges I remembered from the 1940s. In 2013, I purchased this lodge at Valhalla which I reconstructed in the Rustic Storybook Style of the community. Now, when I look back to the time spent in the Valhalla community my pleasant memories are enhanced by continuity.



Lake Valhalla - 1941

Valhalla Highlands contains 58 lodges located on 1,100 acres. Lake Valhalla occurs at an elevation of 607 feet with Scofield Ridge to the west rising sharply to an elevation of 1,540 feet.

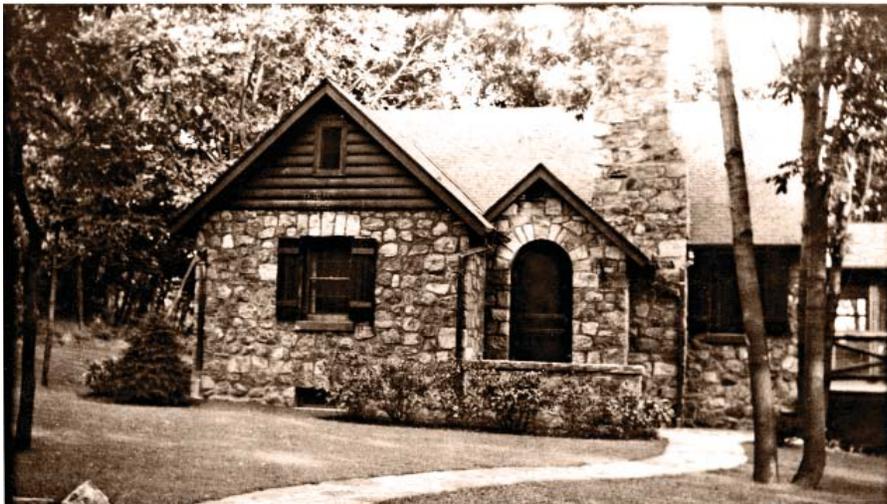
In addition to the lodges, there are common facility structures consisting of a boat lodge with a ping-pong room and a terrace overlooking the Lake, a swimming dock, a boat dock, a tea pavilion, a dance/activities pavilion, a covered lookout pavilion, shuffleboard courts, a tennis court, a playing field, a picnic area and the remnants of a hunting cabin.

Throughout the forest and Scofield Ridge, there are trails with peeled log and fieldstone rustic improvements consisting of benches, steps, railings and terraces. On the mountain, at an elevation of 665 feet, there is a cookout area with a stone fireplace, stone paving, a stone and cast stone table and a lookout with plank flooring, peeled log railings and a flagpole. There are camping areas in the forest and a stream with a waterfall.

Each lodge is situated on its own parcel of land, laid out during the 1930s. The lodges are typically one or two stories high and have fieldstone foundations. Most of the lodges and the enclosed community facility buildings have irregular massing and are frame clad with half-log wood siding and fieldstone foundations, chimneys and terraces. The lodges also feature swooping asphalt shingle roofs, cantilevered entry porches, small paned wood and steel windows, and incorporated garages. They are all free-standing structures with gable roofs.

The organized community of Valhalla Highlands, its lodges, roads, common facilities and landscape, is a distinct type of American architecture - the Rustic Storybook Style popular in the years between World War I and World War II.

With their buttressed fieldstone and half-log walls, multi-color asphalt shingles, swooping peaked roofs, asymmetrical roof pitches, prominent fieldstone chimneys, knotty pine interiors, fieldstone paths, boulder bordered roads, free-standing arched peeled log entrances, canvas awnings, half-log flower boxes,



Valhalla Highlands Lodge



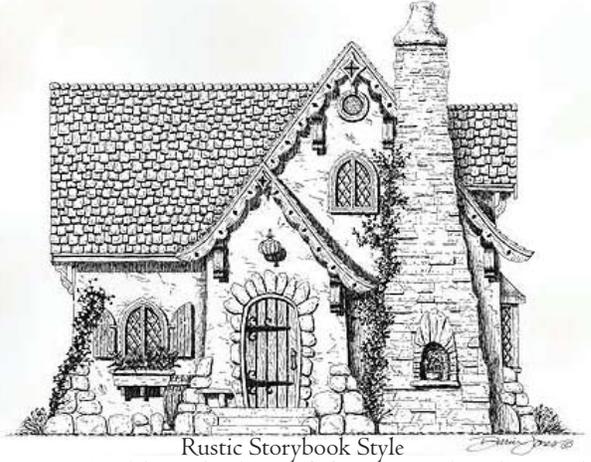
Boat House on Lake Valhalla

and small-paned steel and wood windows, the buildings of Valhalla Highlands are characteristic of the unique Rustic Storybook Style. The Style was the product of architects and builders with a distinct flair for theater, a love of fine craftsmanship and, not least, a good sense of humour. It was also a nostalgic interpretation of the pre-machine age early American settlements. The

playful, fairy-tale aesthetic incorporated into the design of Valhalla Highlands' lodges and common facilities was well suited to the summer community's theme of a Nordic paradise. To the delight of the children of the community, a number of owners added their own playful touch by maintaining gardens fronting their lodges inhabited by cast-iron elves.

Valhalla Highlands has the three classic Rustic Storybook Style attributes namely:

- a picturesque, quaint and charming interpretation of medieval elements as in the steel windows with their resemblance of leaded windows and entrance doors with strap iron hinges;
- an artificial suggestion of age through rusticated peeled logs and weathered fieldstone; and
- whimsicalness and creative playfulness in the buildings, the setting, the community name and the road names.



Rustic Storybook Style

Over 80 years old, this intact lyrical, lake side community blurs the line of fantasy and reality with an inherent sense of humor. No two lodges are the same and the community is harmoniously placed in a magnificent natural setting. The size, type and use of the buildings, essentially unchanged from the time of their origin, contribute to the feeling of historic context, readily identifiable sense of place and substantial unity. All the lodges are placed on the building lots laid out in the 1930s and there is a carefully organized system of roads and landscaping which continues to maintain its integrity.

Ludwig Novoting, the builder of Valhalla Highlands, was born in Austria in 1891, immigrated to the United State in 1913 and died in 1985. In 1925, Novoting and Norway-born Peter Sivertsen, the inventor of the motorized rotary slicer, established the Globe Slicing Machine Company. For over 50 years, the Globe Slicing Machine Company dominated the slicing machine business.

In 1928, Novoting and Sivertsen purchased 1,100 acres in the North Highland area of the Village of Cold Spring. Novoting eventually bought Sivertsen's interest and constructed a stylistically cohesive summer community of individual lodges with shared amenities including common facilities, rustic improvements and the entirety of Valhalla Highlands. His work included the creation of the 3,200' long, 32 acre Lake Valhalla.

Upon completion of his work, Novoting sold the individual lodges and the land they sat upon, emphasizing the rusticity, simplicity and nostalgia associated with a remote, rural retreat in harmony with the



Lake Valhalla Lodge

natural landscape of Valhalla Highlands. The lodges were equipped with fireplaces, high ceilinged living rooms, porches and a garage. The lodges were strictly for seasonal use, without water from early fall to late spring and no central heat. An annual fee was charged for maintenance and supplying water via above ground pipes. The deeds to the lodges gave the owners the right to use the common facilities, the common facility structures, the rustic improvements, the roads and the trails running throughout the 1,100 acres of land.

Some of the purchasers were employees of the Globe Slicing Machine

and many of them were, like Novoting and his wife, German/Austrian-Americans and, like Sivertsen, Norwegian-Americans all of whom had immigrated to America in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Novoting built for himself and his wife, Josephine, a house which he called Valkyrie. Novoting chose the name Valhalla for the community and Vallkyrie for his home, because of his love for the music of Wagner. Valhalla Highlands was not primarily a speculative

venture for Novoting. Since it was his home and the seasonal home for some of his friends and employees, the level of craftsmanship, the extent of the improvements and the unrestricted access to the land went far beyond economic considerations. Novoting created a legacy for himself and for the community.

Valhalla Highlands is one of the very few uniform, planned communities with individually owned lodges and community facilities purposely built by one person, in one style, in a single construction campaign. Each structure uses the same vocabulary with no two structures being the same. In fact, it is difficult to find another, intact, contained, fully planned, designed and built in one rustic style, community with ownership



Valhalla Highlands Lodge



Alheim Lodge Lakeside View



Alfheim Lodge from the south

of the lodges, shared common facilities and expansion constricted by deed and terrain.

In the summer of 2013, I commenced reconstruction of Alfheim Lodge at Valhalla Highlands. With its buttressed fieldstone and half-log walls, multi-color asphalt shingles, swooping peaked roofs, knotty pine interiors and small-paned steel and wood windows, Alfheim Lodge is characteristic of the Rustic Storybook Style prevalent in the Lake Valhalla community.

I named the house Alfheim Lodge. Alfheim (pronounced “*ALF-hame*”) means elf home and it is one of the worlds in Norse and Germanic mythology, along with Valhalla, occupied by Valkyries

In 2014, I had returned to Valhalla Highlands, my first love of a house and the origin of my passion for houses.



Alfheim Lodge - Winter