



**EMPIRE STATE  
POSTAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY**

**APS UNIT 28**

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Meets twice annually

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## WANAKENA SURVIVED THE LUMBER BOOM

*By Gerald Wiley*

When Herbert Rich came to Cranberry Lake in 1901, he found an ideal location for his logging and lumbering operations. He purchased 16,000 acres on the southwest side of the lake, located in Saint Lawrence County, and in 1902 the village of Wanakena was being constructed, along with logging camps, mills for processing the timber and several miles of logging railroad, all supervised by the Rich Lumber Company.

The post office at Wanakena was established in September, 1902 with George H. Bullcock as postmaster. In 1903 the six-mile Cranberry Lake Railroad connecting Wanakena and Benson Mines was officially opened, giving improved access to the outside world.

Before Wanakena, a settlement already existed on the north end of the lake, Cranberry Lake village. The post office there, established as Cranberry Lake in March 1891, operated under that name until May 1893. From then until late in August 1902 it was called Harewood, the name of the town. Then, back to the Cranberry Lake name which is still in use today.

In 1908 the Wanakena & Cranberry Lake RPO (Railway Post Office), a mail boat with post office aboard, was put into service to deliver and pick up mail around Cranberry Lake during the summer season. That service was discontinued in 1935.

When the Rich Lumber Company ceased operations in 1912, Wanakena survived, unlike many logging villages, with permanent residents enjoying the quiet life in a small Adirondack village. In 1912 the first students arrived at the New York State Ranger School, two miles from Wanakena, being erected on land donated by the Rich Lumber Company.

The Wanakena and Cranberry Lake post offices are still open for business. ■