

Their book is the definitive chronicle.
Glenn Hoagland,
Executive Director,
Mohonk Preserve



This book is to be savored and read again and again.
Bob Anderberg,
Open Space Institute

The Shawangunk Mountains of New York's Ulster County are a protected region of stunning natural beauty, with hundreds of acres under the stewardship of the Mohonk Preserve and the Minnewaska State Park Preserve. The range is "one of Earth's last great places" and a hikers' and rock climbers' paradise, but it was not always this way. From early post-Revolutionary days through World War II, a few hardy families scratched out a living atop the mountain, defying an unforgiving and isolated terrain. For generations they lived off the land, working subsistence farms and harvesting raw materials from the forest and earth.

Today only a few vestiges of this proud and independent community remain. The rest has vanished along with the way of life that sustained it, but in the pages of this book Robi Josephson and Bob Larsen breathe life into this lost world and the people who once called it home. This long-awaited work, the result of their combined 50-year odyssey and Larsen's groundbreaking research, tells the remarkable story of the Trapps people and how the hamlet was honored with placement on the National and State Registers of Historic Places—the first time New York State has recognized the historic importance of a vanished, hardscrabble community.

Without this detailed and compassionate book, it is difficult to imagine life on a "scratch farm" on the rocky slopes of the Shawangunks. Only a few generations ago, our ancestors could "live for a long time without going to the store for fruit, vegetables, meat and supplies." These are people who truly define pioneer spirit, tenacity and grit. In a very substantial piece of work, Josephson and Larsen bring their vanished lifestyle back in full color, giving us more insight into the Gunks landscape today. Cara Lee, Shawangunk Ridge Program Director, The Nature Conservancy



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An Unforgiving Land

JOSEPHSON
AND LARSEN



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Hardscrabble Life in the Trapps, a Vanished Shawangunk Mountain Hamlet

ROBI JOSEPHSON AND BOB LARSEN

