



**WACCABUC HILLS**  
Lewisboro, NY ☀ 1973



Returning from a month in India and Bangladesh with a deepening awareness of the world's disparities in wealth, consumption, waste, health and contentment, I felt I had to better understand and help address the imbalances but didn't know how. Discovering what that should include started soon after with the design of Waccabuc Hills, a new town for 12,000 residents of mixed ages and incomes located approximately 40 miles northeast of New York City. Waccabuc Hills was the last and largest of the mostly suburban communities that I helped Callister, Payne and Bischoff's Amherst, MA office design. Each of the progressive, internationally renowned and award-winning firm's many community designs incorporated several innovative, resource-conserving and ultimately very popular ideas including: respect of the site's essential nature, topography, hydrology, geology and native wildlife, features and vegetation - fewer, narrower and less intrusive roads located whenever possible around the community's periphery - a rich diversity of differently clustered dwelling types, collective "car barns", foot, bike and horse paths - generously landscaped common open spaces and facilities - and more spirited architecture based on indigenous archetypes using healthy, natural and primarily common native materials. Paths along streams and canals interconnected uniquely different neighborhoods through landscaped parkways to commercial centers located along the banks of larger ponds and lakes with each element sited to complement rather than violate the site's essential nature and design promise, see - <http://www.heritagevillage.org/>. The project's site analysis, design and approved development permit were appealed to and subsequently upheld by New York State's Supreme Court. A severe recession prevented the town's realization but the court's historic ruling reaffirmed the many environmental benefits that could have been realized by the rigorously scrutinized design and established a legal precedent that has helped to eliminate exclusionary zoning throughout the state while minimizing growth impacts threatening family farms and natural areas.