



Bungalow Kid: A Catskill Mountain Summer

Philip Ratzer

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Vividly and lovingly recreates a city kid's summer in the Catskills in the 1950s.

The year is 1958. Philip, a twelve-year-old kid from the Bronx, is getting ready for his family's annual trip upstate, where he'll spend the summer in a bungalow colony in the tiny village of Loch Sheldrake, New York, a faraway fairyland of mountains, lakes, starry nights, and dewy mornings. With his colony friends, he'll explore the woods and fields, have an array of adventures, and even experience the special charm of a childhood summer romance. It was a time and place of wonderful memories wistfully looked back upon fifty years later, and lovingly recalled in Philip Ratzer's memoir. What young Philip didn't know was that there would never be another summer like this one.

He was not alone. In the 1950s, about two thousand bungalow colonies dotted the countryside of Sullivan and Ulster counties, catering to an estimated one million people a year who spent all or part of their summer in "The Mountains." Among them were countless kids like Philip, who today carry with them the fondest of memories and a nostalgic longing for a precious moment in time that can never be equaled. Today, they find themselves returning to the country, seeking out the places where they stayed so long ago, only to find that the world has changed a lot in fifty years, and time has a way of erasing all evidence of a world that used to be. Bungalow Kid vividly recreates what it was like to be a city kid in the Catskills in the 1950s, and reaches out to all those kids, now grown, who would very much like to go back.

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