

## HISTORY OF HOSTELLING<sup>1</sup>

Hostelling as a concept leads back to pre-medieval roots. The term *hospitalia* was known as accommodation maintained by monasteries for travelers. This led to medieval inns for those involved in commerce and the eventual acceptance of travel as a cultural activity. This was encouraged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the development of stagecoaches and railways, and illustrated by the start of tourism associations, organized tours, the Swiss hotel industry and Baedeker's guidebooks.

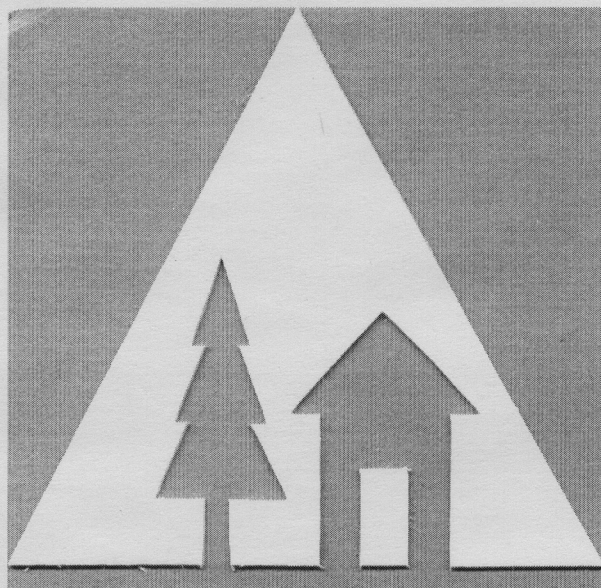
In 1884, in reaction to the urban lifestyle, Guido Rotter established a getaway for students and scholars in Bohemia, credited as the first "Students' and Scholars' Hostel." Similar hostels followed in both Austria and Germany, including the first "youth hostel," started by Richard Schirrmann in 1909 in his school in Altena. His writing, *Jugendwandern / Volksschuler-herberggen* provided detailed guidelines for all aspects of hostel management.

The German Youth Hostel Association was formally constituted in 1919. It encouraged love for the countryside and offered low-cost lodging that should be "simple and suitable sleeping accommodation - a friendly meeting place for young people."<sup>2</sup> Other European countries followed suit and by 1930, Switzerland, Poland, Denmark, Netherlands, Scotland, England, Wales and France had formed youth hostel associations of their own.

It wasn't long before America caught on. The first American youth hostel opened in 1934 in Northfield, Massachusetts. The International Youth Hostel Federation, founded in 1932, published guidelines and a mission statement to unite the purpose of all youth hostels.

<sup>1</sup> *The International Youth Hostel Manual*, c 1954, Copenhagen: International Youth Hostel Federation, (as summarized from Chapter 1), pp. 8-17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.



"To promote the education of all young people of all nations, but especially young people of limited means, by encouraging in them a greater knowledge, love, and care of the countryside and an appreciation of the cultural values of towns and cities in all parts of the world, and as ancillary thereto provide hostels or other accommodation in which there shall be no distinctions of race, nationality, color, religion, sex, class or political opinions and thereby to develop a better understanding of their fellow men, both at home and abroad."<sup>3</sup>

- Mission Statement of the International Youth Hostel Federation

<sup>3</sup> *Hostelling North America 1997*, c 1996, Hostelling International-American Youth Hostels and Hostelling Canada, p. 4.

## ARCHITECTURE AS HOST

Architecture hosts; buildings shelter. There is a distinction between architecture and building in *intention*. In a youth hostel, it is suggested, that for a reasonable charge, one can experience a safe, sheltered night's stay. It is through a greater intention that the guest can also experience the uniqueness of place and the hospitality of architecture.

The focus throughout this thesis in achieving hospitality through architecture was not to afford luxuries, but to provide richness in experience. The spaces provide a guest both the familiarity of home and promote the adventure of the local culture. Moments lived in architectural detail such as unloading bags, resting tired limbs, sharing a meal, doing laundry, writing a postcard, asking for information, chatting with a fellow guest, or leaning on the rail of the balcony offer hospitality to adventurous guests.