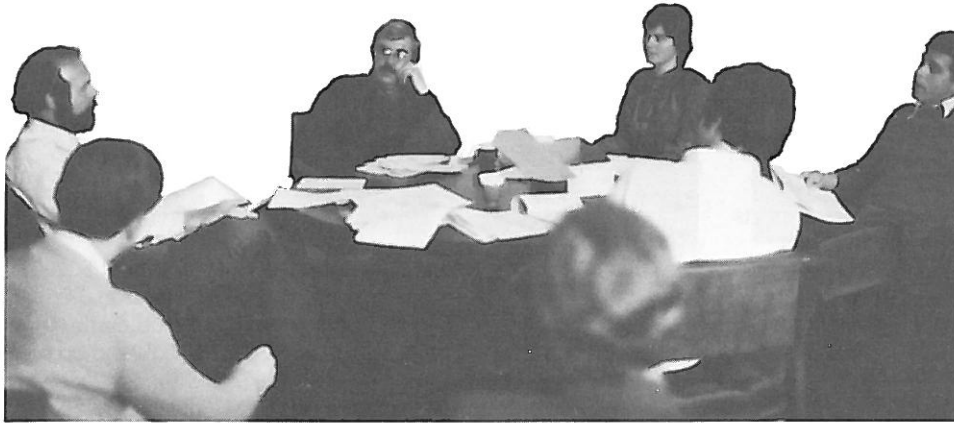


Chapter 3

The Hamlets Are Analyzed



Issues workshops: Designing the study

The first step in analyzing the hamlets was to develop a sound, comprehensive data base. Information was needed for each hamlet that included both quantitative and qualitative characteristics. Data derived from existing sources, such as the U.S. census reports, are referenced to civil divisions — primarily townships or counties defined by political rather than geographic boundaries. Information coded in this manner was of little help in analyzing the hamlets as physical places. Therefore, it was necessary to devise an independent data base for the project from inventory questionnaires and extensive field work.

The process of analyzing a total group of 135 hamlets located in as vast a geographic area as the Adirondacks proved to be a challenge. It was necessary that the process be thorough and exact enough to enable the study team to become familiar with each hamlet and its individual problems and opportunities, in spite of the limitation of time placed on the project. A six-part process involving the consultant team, the four participating county planning directors, and a representative of the APA staff took place. These six parts were:

- Part 1: Inventory Questionnaire
- Part 2: Hamlet Site Visits
- Part 3: Issues Workshops
- Part 4: Hamlet Research
- Part 5: Matrix Compilation
- Part 6: Data Selection and Grouping

Part 1: Inventory Questionnaire

— A three-page inventory questionnaire was distributed to the planning directors with the request that it be completed for each Adirondack hamlet within their county. The questionnaire was designed to inventory existing information about the hamlets through the county planners and was not intended to survey attitudes or opinions of people living in or using the Park. Researchers in the Department of Rural Sociology at Cornell University assisted the team in the inventory format which addressed the following information areas: 1) Demographic criteria: figures concerning year-round and seasonal population, ages of population, income levels, and education levels; 2) Regional location characteristics: ownership patterns of surrounding lands, transportation access; 3) Economic base data and economic potential: the hamlet's service area, seasonal retail activity, public facilities, the contribution of tourism; 4) Built environmental qualities: historic significance, visual appearance of buildings (including occupancy and condition), traffic problems; and 5) Social organization, planning and development: the presence of or plan for revitalization activities in the hamlet. These information areas were covered in a total of 34 questions and became the core data source for each community.

Part 2: Hamlet Site Visits — Each of the 135 individual settlements in the Adirondack Park was visited by the study team. Upon arrival at each hamlet, the team conducted a brief visual analysis. Utilizing a form developed for recording the physical qualities of the hamlet, the team took note of: the hamlet's setting, the built-in design assets of the hamlet, the visible economic activity in the hamlet, and the hamlet's proximity to other communities in the Park. In addition, the team surveyed other aspects of the hamlet's built environment noting the presence of neighborhoods, districts and village core, and the condition and character of buildings, signs, and monuments. Finally, an objective observation of the hamlet's unique character or personality as perceived by a visitor was noted.

With these written notes the team also used pictorial imagery to conduct the analysis. In each hamlet a cognitive map was drawn, diagramming its physical layout. Photographic images of the settlement were taken with an eye on recording the essence of the place and for reference in identifying the communities. Photographs were developed on contact sheets to make them more accessible.

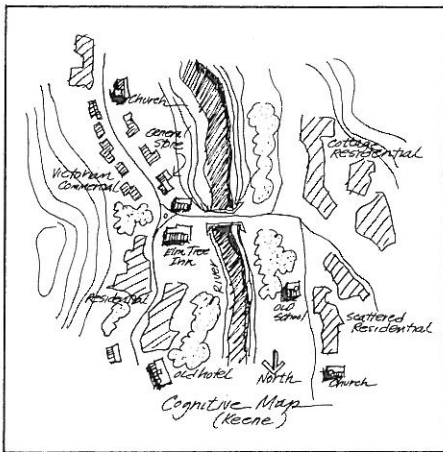
Part 3: Issues Workshops — Biweekly issues workshops were conducted with the client group by the consultant

"The first step in analyzing the hamlets was to develop a sound, comprehensive data base."

throughout the duration of the project. At these sessions the conceptual direction of the study was established and the interpretation of information discussed. The interactive nature of the sessions allowed for continuous rethinking of the questions and issues generated by the analysis.

Part 4: Hamlet Research —

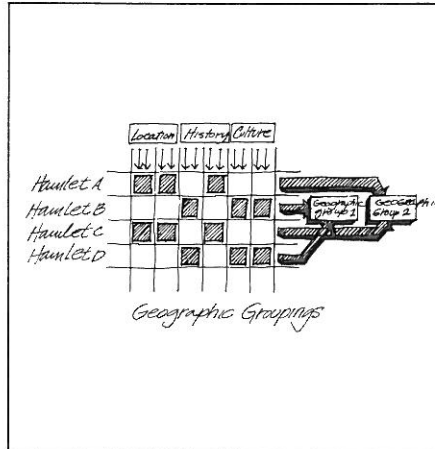
Research material was added to the questionnaire and site visitations outlining the historical and cultural backgrounds of the Adirondack hamlets. Writers Alfred Donaldson, William White, and Frank Graham, Jr. were among the primary and secondary sources utilized to achieve a greater knowledge and appreciation of Adirondack Park settlement areas.



Typical cognitive map used in analyzing a hamlet

Part 5: Matrix Compilation —

Upon completion of the questionnaires and site visits, the resulting information was gathered together and plotted onto a large graphic matrix. This matrix listed across its top the 52 areas of information which had been collated for each hamlet. The 135 hamlets were listed down the left side.



Part 6: Data Selection and Grouping —

Once the information was compiled on the matrix, it was possible to define comprehensive groupings of hamlets within the Adirondack Park. As previously stated, the primary objective of the study was to identify both the unique problems of individual hamlets and the combined problems of groups of hamlets. Therefore, the process of cross-referencing data on the matrix became essential to formulating groups.

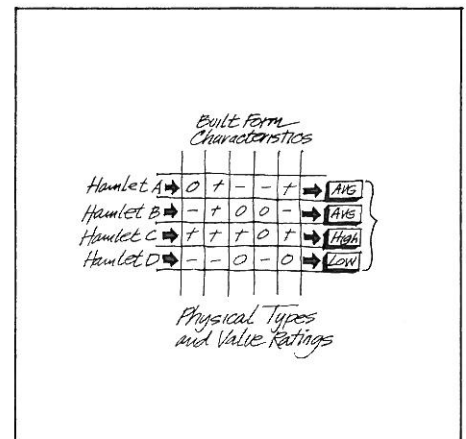
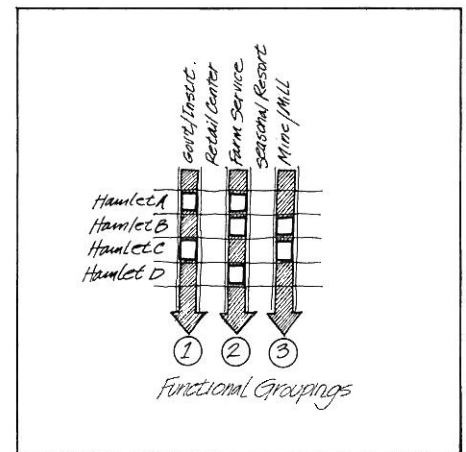
Three approaches were used to correlate data on the matrix. These were:

- Profile selections
- Groupings by key single variables
- Value ratings

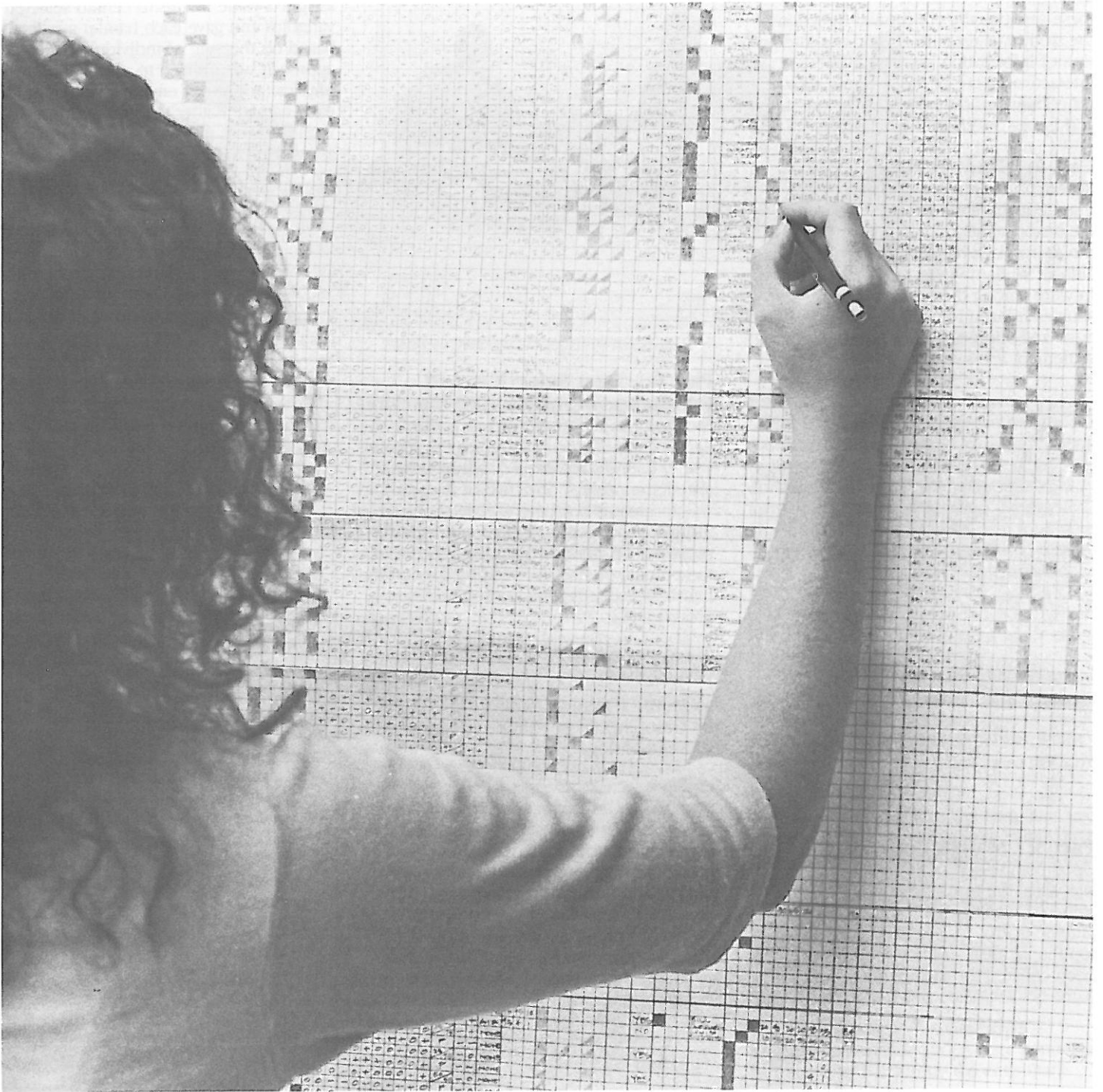
Profile selections clustered variables horizontally on the matrix and grouped hamlets according to similarities. This cross tabulation method is how the geographic groupings were largely determined. The second approach selected **key single variables** on the matrix and moved vertically down the column of a chosen variable to discern which hamlets fell within a given category. This was how the functional groupings were derived. The third approach

assigned value ratings to certain selected variables and gave each hamlet a rating based on the sum of individual ratings. This approach was utilized to determine the physical and visual environment rating of each hamlet. Rather than numerical values, variables were given qualitative ratings such as average, below average, or above average.

The three approaches to data correlation enabled the study team to identify a hamlet's geography, function, and form and led to three major hamlet groupings: **Geographic Groupings**, **Function Groupings**, and **Physical Types**. These three hamlet groups are described in detail in the following chapter.



"The matrix as a tool for analyzing the hamlets."



"The process of analyzing 135 hamlets proved to be a challenge."

