


2005

Grand Hotels: Orlando's Landmarks (1880's - 1980's), Exhibit Brochure

Deb Ebster

Linda Black

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Bibliography

The following resources may be useful for those who wish to read more about the history of lodging and hospitality in Central Florida:

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"...You should see the hotel being built here (all wood of course) with about 3 or 4 hundred rooms in it, all for the northerns who want to come and winter in and they say that every room is engage[d] already and this is at present a most out of the way place with just two stores and a station (train) . . .

—Excerpt from a letter, Helen F. Warner to her mother, dated August 14, 1885, Winter Park, Florida (Central Florida Memory Project)



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THE

ORANGE COUNTY
REGIONAL
HISTORY CENTER
(407) 836-8500

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www.thehistorycenter.org

Exhibit Curator
Deb Ebster, Head

Graphic Design
Linda Black

University of Central Florida
Universal Orlando Foundation
Library

Rosen College of Hospitality
Management

9907 Universal Blvd.
Orlando, Florida 32819-8701
(407)903-8100
<http://library.ucf.edu/rosen>



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Is pleased to present a
Special Exhibit

In Association With
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGIONAL
HISTORY CENTER

January-March 2005



THESE ARTIFACTS —

A KEY RING, A DECK OF CARDS, A COFFEE POT, A SMALL PHARMACY BOX, OR A HOTEL ROOM DOOR SIGN LISTING THE RULES OF THE HOTEL— ARE, IN MANY CASES, ALL WHICH REMAIN TO TELL THE STORY OF SOME OF THE GRANDEST HOTELS IN THE— **HISTORY OF ORLANDO HOSPITALITY.**

For the next 100 years— these grand hotels, with their guest rooms, swimming pools, restaurants, barbershops & pharmacies, spaces for conventions and wedding receptions, provided services and great gathering places for Orlando’s residents and visitors alike.



- Featured Hotels**
- Angebilt Hotel: 1923-1980's**
 - Cherry Plaza Hotel: 1950's-1960's**
 - Contemporary Hotel: 1971- Present**
 - Empire Hotel: 1913-1960's**
 - Fort Gatlin Hotel: 1926-1964**
 - Harley Hotel: 1963-2000**
 - Hotel Lucerne: 1907-1966**
 - Lamar Hotel: 1924-1997**
 - Orange Court Motor Lodge: 1928-88**
 - St. Charles Hotel: 1908-1929**
 - San Juan Hotel: 1885-1980**
 - Seminole Hotel: 1902-1970**
 - Tremont Hotel: 1875-1956**
 - Wyoming/Darrow Hotel: 1900-1950's**



Orlando in the 1880's was a raw town with lots of dirt streets. Emerging as Florida's largest inland city once the railroads provided access, the town rapidly attracted visitors who came for business and for pleasure— all in need of lodging.



Charles Hotel, Orlando, Fla.

With the exception of Disney’s **Contemporary Resort**, few of these landmarks remain intact today. The **San Juan** – one of the state’s largest and most elegant hotels when it opened in the 1880s – after being destroyed by fire in 1979, eventually met the fate of the wrecking ball



The **Orange Court Motor Lodge**, one of Orlando’s most luxurious hotels, housed the cream of Orlando’s society and even boasted the area’s first indoor swimming pool – was demolished in 1990.



The few left standing are no longer used as hotels. Fortunately, the **Angebilt** – Orlando’s first skyscraper when it was built in 1923 by Murray S. King, Florida’s first registered architect— a downtown focus for decades, a spot where glove-clad ladies lunched and couples glided to big band tunes – still stands, restored as home to an engineering company. The old Harley Hotel, a downtown landmark on Washington St. with waterfront views of Lake Eola, was sold off and recently converted to condos.



Photo from Angebilt Hotel prospectus depicting view of Downtown Orange Avenue 1929