

# **The Windsor Hotel Records**

Special Collections  
Benjamin E. Feinberg Library  
Plattsburgh State University College  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

By  
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## **Introduction**

The Windsor Hotel, opened in Elizabethtown in 1876, typifies one of the most dynamic and exciting eras in the history of the Adirondacks. After the Civil War, the Adirondacks became one of the country's premiere summer resort and vacation spots. A postwar boom provided the Northern States with prosperity, and created a new leisure class. They turned to the Adirondacks to expend their new found wealth at summer resort hotels which provided unmatched social, cultural, and recreational activities and events. In this way, the hotel was not merely where one slept during a vacation; it was the vacation.

A deluge of wealthy tourists, many from New York City, descended upon the Adirondacks to spend their summers in the wilderness of Northern New York. Suddenly, the Adirondacks were in vogue. It was not uncommon for guests to stay at the Windsor for a month or longer. Some even spent the entire summer and invited groups of family and friends. Cordial friendships were struck up between these faithful guests and the owners and managers of the Windsor. Journalists wrote about the blessed life of untamed wilderness, and those who had vacationed at the Scottish Highlands, claimed that the Adirondacks were every bit as "lovely and chic". The Adirondacks had snob appeal as stage coaches, lake steamers and railroads brought affluent ladies and gentlemen to Elizabethtown on the journey known as the "Northern Grand Tour". Tourism became a major industry in Elizabeth-town and numerous hotels sprung up to accommodate the abundance of visitors. The Windsor Hotel was one of the most popular of these resort hotels.

The Windsor itself was a truly impressive structure, set in ideal surroundings. The Windsor was an immense hotel, painted cream with white trimmings and wide verandas. The huge hotel accommodated over 300 guests in the main house and adjacent cottages. The lawns were spacious and meticulously kept, dotted with wide maple trees. A special flower garden brightened the grounds. But perhaps the brightest attraction at the Windsor was its wide array of splendid social and cultural functions. The hotel provided morning concerts, and each evening there was dancing. "The Sunday Evening sacred concerts have become famous in this section and are always

enjoyed by guests and cottagers". The hotel also boasted a casino, which "affords splendid entertainment and is much patronized." In addition, the Cobble Hill Golf Course, one of the finest in the state, was located only 500 yards from the hotel. Art shows and sales were also a fixture at the Windsor. Besides these activities centered around the hotel, the magnificence of the Adirondacks offered pure and unspoiled recreation. The mountains provided numerous nature hikes, and hunting grounds, as well as lakes and rivers for fishing and canoeing. The purity of the air was acclaimed by guests as being refreshing and invigorating. The hotel provided its guests with fresh vegetables, fruits, milk, cream, and eggs from its own farm, orchard and dairy.

The founder and original owner of the Windsor was Orlando Kellogg, Jr. He was a descendant of William and Elijah Kellogg, two of the first settlers of Elizabethtown. The owner of the Windsor during the time covered by this collection was Louis E. Parent, and the manager was John K. Van Wagoner. Although going through some changes, the Windsor lingered on until 1968, when the outer shell of the "old" hotel was brought down and burned.

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## CONTENTS

The collection is housed in two full Hollinger boxes, two large storage boxes, and five large folders.

Hollinger box 1 consists of correspondence from April 28, 1936 to September 1, 1936, and is divided into 8 folders. The majority of the correspondence deals with reservations and allows the reader to get a taste of the atmosphere at the Windsor.

Hollinger box 2 contains guests' index and departures for 1921, 1926, and 1928-1929. This box is divided into 3 envelopes, and allows the reader to see the great distances guests traveled to stay at the Windsor.

Large storage box 1 contains guests' ledgers for 1924, 1925-1926, and 1930-1934. This box is divided into four folders.

Large storage box 2 consists of guests' ledgers 1927-1934, divided into 4 folders.

Large folder 1 contains the auditor's report, 1935.

Large folder 2 contains registration sheets for June 11, 1936-September 14, 1936.

Large folders 3.1-3.3 contain guest register sheets for May 30, 1925-October 16, 1927. The register sheet allows the reader to see who stayed at the Windsor.

## **Box 1 CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS**

Folder 1 April 28, 1936-May 13, 1936 19 Items  
Folder 2 May 15, 1936-June 10, 1936 21 Items  
Folder 3 June 12, 1936-June 25, 1936 24 Items  
Folder 4 June 26, 1936-July 7, 1936 22 Items  
Folder 5 July 8, 1936-July 14, 1936 21 Items  
Folder 6 July 15, 1936-July 29, 1936 20 Items  
Folder 7 July 31, 1936-August 17, 1936 21 Items  
Folder 8 August 18, 1936-September 1, 1936 9 Items

## **Box 2 INDEXES ITEMS**

Envelope 1 Guest Index, 1921 1 Item  
Envelope 2 Departures, 1926 1 Item  
Envelope 3 Departures, 1925/29 1 Item

## **Storage Box 1**

Folder 1 Guest Ledger, 1924 1 Item  
Folder 2 Guest Ledger, 1925-26 1 Item  
Folder 3.1 Guest Ledger, May 29, 1930-August 15, 1931 1 Item  
Folder 3.2 Guest Ledger, August 16, 193-September 26, 1934 1 Item

## **Storage Box 2**

Folder 1.1 Account Books, 1927-1934 (A-H) 1 Item  
Folder 1.2 Account Books, 1927-1934 (I-R) 1 Item  
Folder 1.3 Account Books, 1927-1934 (R-Z) 1 Item  
Folder 2 Account Book, 1934 1 Item  
Large Folder 1 Auditor's Report, 1935 1 Item  
Large Folder 2 Registration sheets, June 11, 1936-September 14, 1936 1 Item  
Large Folder 3.1-3.3 Registration Sheets, May 30, 1925-October 16, 1927 3 Items

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## **NUMBER OF ITEMS:**

**Box 1** 157  
**Box 2** 3  
**Storage Box 1** 4  
**Storage Box 2** 4  
**Large Folder 1** 1  
**Large Folder 2** 1  
**Large Folder 3** 3  
**Total:** 173