

Reflections from the Past

The Hermitage Hotel – Historical Quarterly

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Transportation and Lodging

Looking back across a century of hospitality, The Hermitage Hotel once welcomed the Glidden tour on October 18, 1912. Charles A. Glidden and fellow motorists left Detroit on October 7th and reached New Orleans on the 26th, an adventurous 1,700 mile tour. While in Nashville they were met by the local auto club and enjoyed a grand dinner at the hotel.



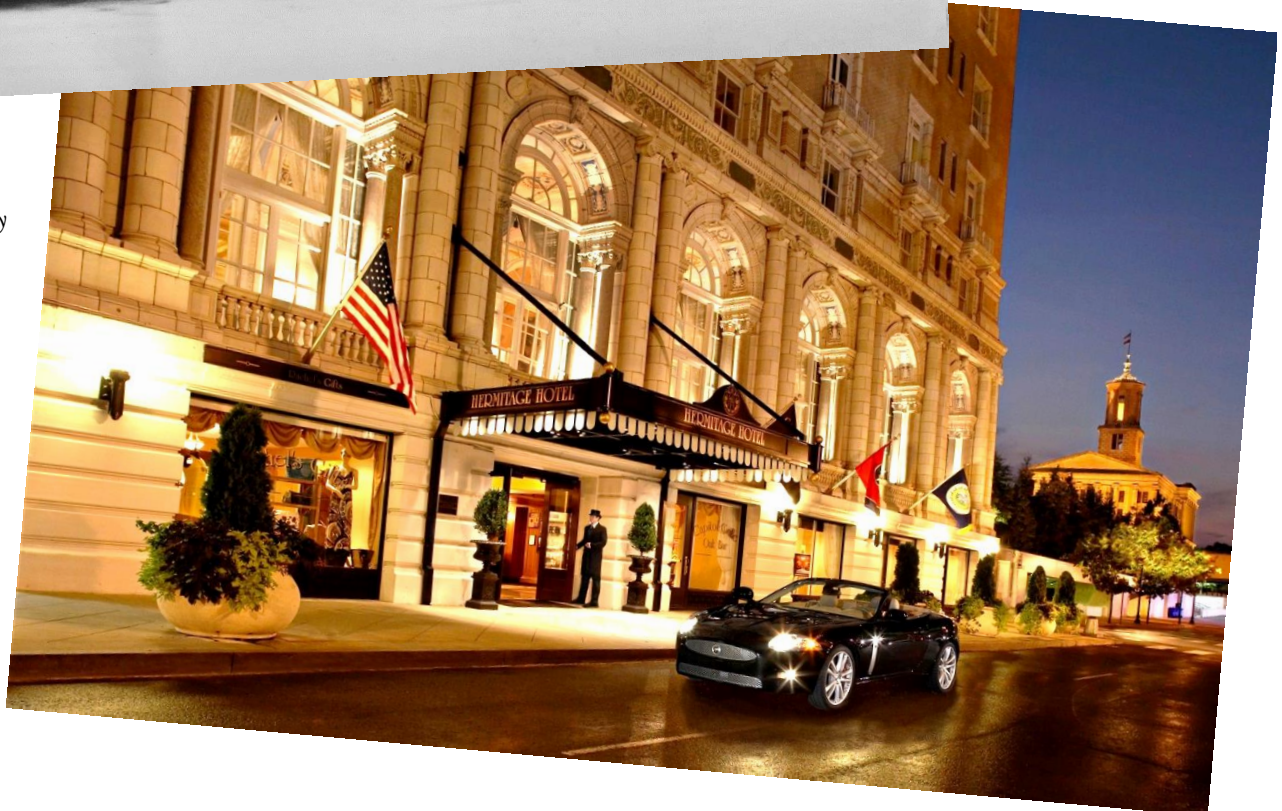
Arriving guests at the Hermitage Hotel are always welcomed with a friendly smile and a quick step, today as a hundred years ago.

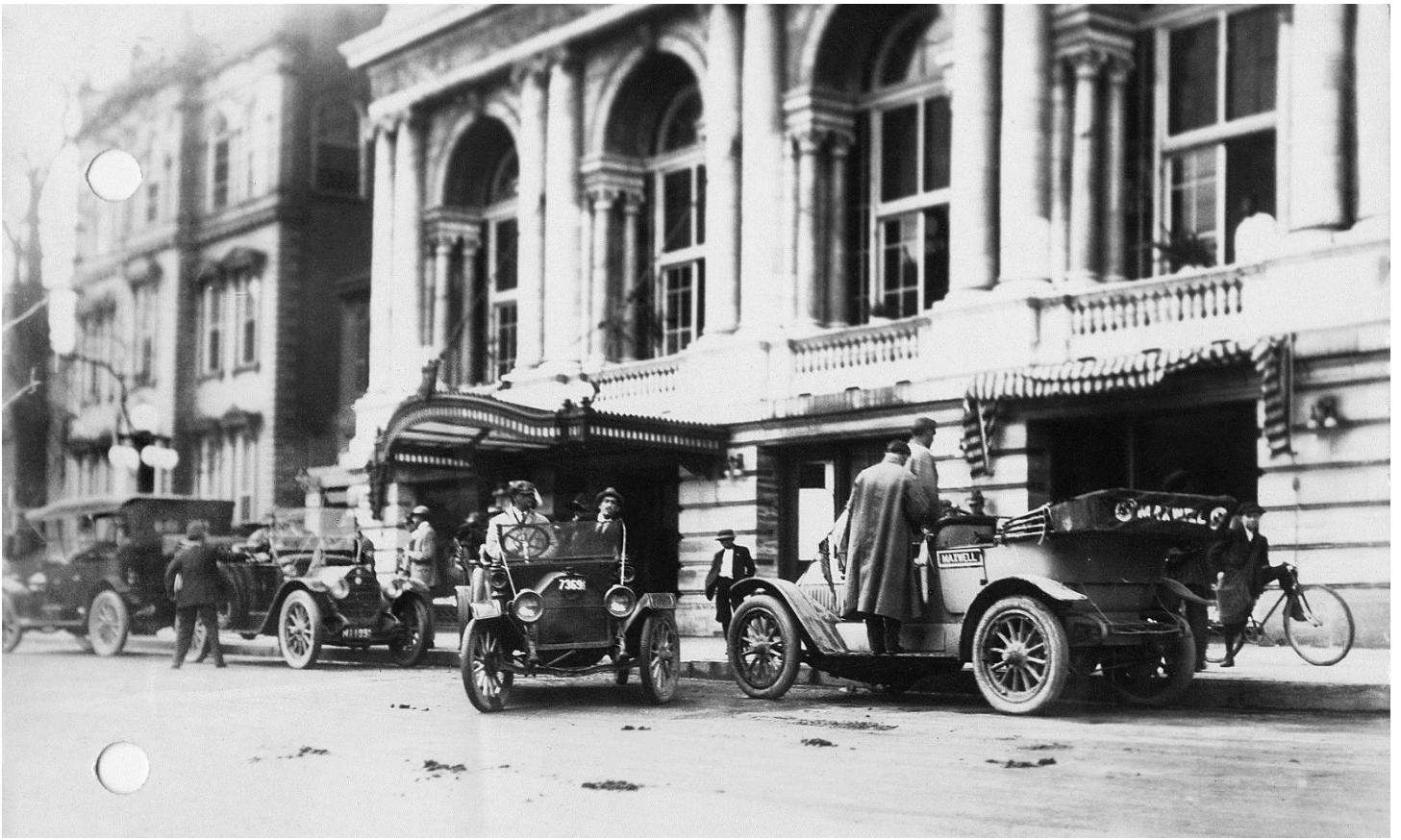
We've greeted over 5 million arriving overnight guests to date, conservatively estimated.



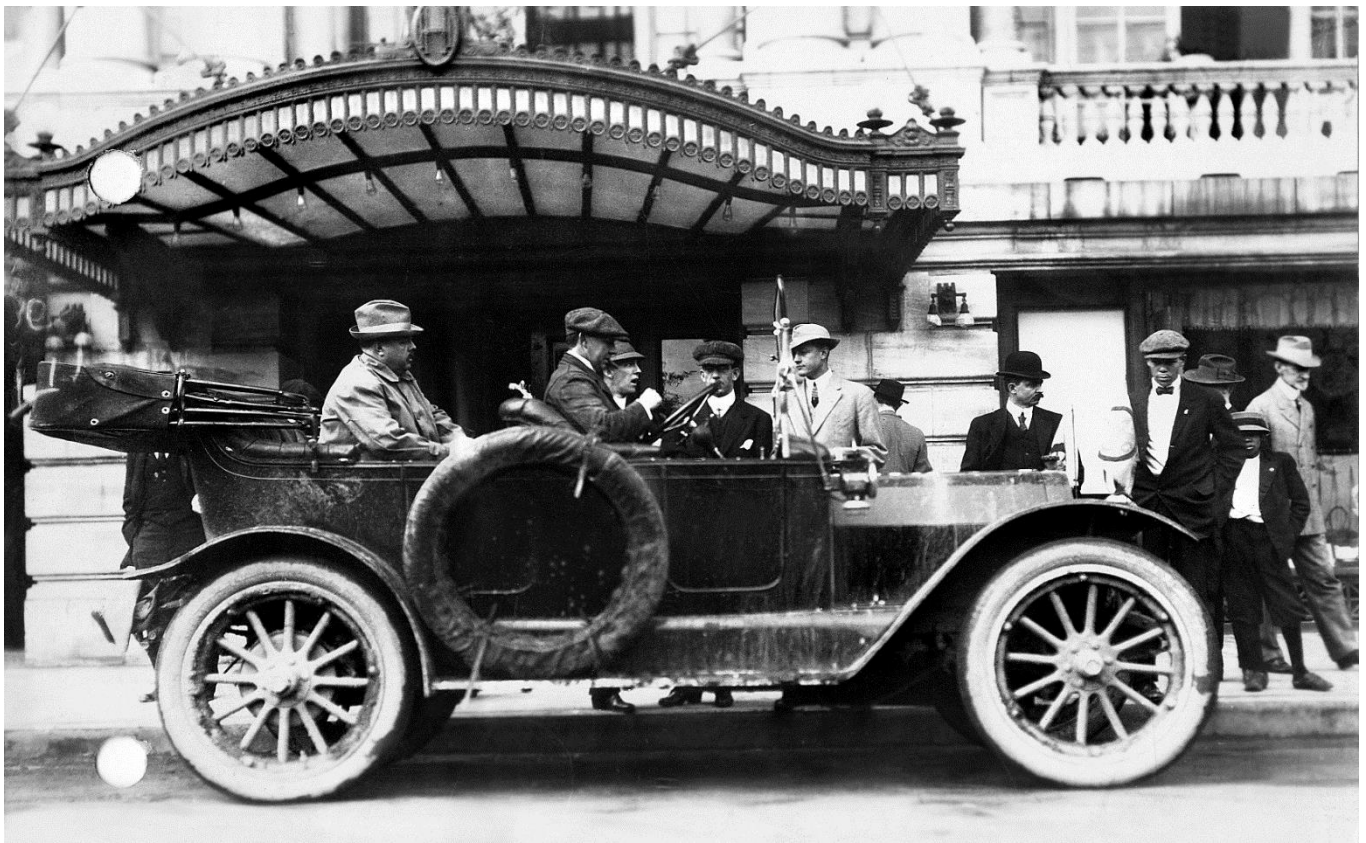
Vintage photos courtesy of the Detroit Public Library, Spooner & Wells Inc. photographers.

Current photo by David Wright Photography





In these exceptional photos, of additional interest is the old residence at left, where the hotel garage stands today. This was the home of the Oliver B. Hayes family and then the Joseph H. Hough family. One of the children would grow up to become famous as Adelia Hayes Franklin Acklen Cheatham, lady of the Belmont Mansion and estate. The Hermitage Hotel site itself was first the residence of William Carroll who was Tennessee's governor from 1821 to 1827 and again from 1829 to 1835. He brought Nashville's first steamboat – and a wave of prosperity - here a century before the good road movement got underway. What will the next century bring?



Collection of Keys

These vintage keys date from the hotel's earliest days to the present time. Today a cell phone app can be activated to open the guestroom door or the programmed key simply passed over the door hardware to unlock the door.



Our Director of Engineering

A farewell wish and grateful recognition is offered to John Powers, who joins the ranks of great engineers of The Hermitage Hotel who've maintained the physical building and given priority to the comfort and safety of our guests.

John came to work at the hotel in 1998 when it operated as a Westin Hotel. He actively participated in the complex renovation project during 2002-2003 when the hotel was restored and upgraded to the stellar condition we enjoy today. To say he knows the place inside out is no exaggeration. John has been an important part of the operations team, and has led our program to keep every guestroom always looking brand new. A friendly and knowledgeable person, John fully understands both hospitality and the technical necessities of a hotel, especially an older, iconic one.



This photo, taken in 2002, shows John standing in the old circular staircase at street level. It led to the basement and was formerly used by a tenant, the Hermitage Hotel Liquor Store, until 1977. John knows what it's like to be above the lobby painted glass ceiling (replacing a light bulb), atop the roof (adjusting the satellite reception), and down in the elevator pit (clearing out a flood.)

Historic discoveries John has been involved with included a workman's pocket knife found embedded in concrete during the hotel's

construction, a 1913 Grill Room restaurant menu tucked inside a wall, an old brass light fixture from the 9th floor exhibit hall, and a half pint of Kentucky whiskey inside an old shoe shine stand. His colorful stories could fill a book - from setting up a mechanized Christmas display to dispelling rumors of Al Capone's bootleg vault. John directed the placement of the 650- pound gilded mirror to its resting place above the lobby fireplace mantel in 2002, and discovered the pistol bullet holes in the outside wall of Minnesota Fats's old hotel room during renovation. Seems that some of his friends would enjoy target shooting now and then.



John's involvement with the hotel has included support of the farming operations of the hotel, with know-how drawn from childhood days on a farm, and earlier career experience operating heavy machinery. Furthermore, his affinity for all things military and law enforcement has enabled him to be a key person when the hotel has hosted presidential and other celebrity visits.



Do you have some special memories of The Hermitage Hotel ?

To share your own "news" please drop by and see Tom Vickstrom, telephone 615-345-7123 or e-mail archives@thehermitagehotel.com
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