

<https://www.nhpr.org/post/museum-exhibit-explores-new-hampshires-grand-hotels#stream/0>

Museum Exhibit Explores New Hampshire's Grand Hotels

By [SARA ERNST](#) • MAY 20, 2019

[Share](#)[Tweet](#)[Email](#)



The Museum of the White Mountains in Plymouth will display the Grant Hotels exhibit from May 17th to September 12th.

SARA ERNST

The [Museum of the White Mountains](#) at Plymouth State University is featuring an exhibit on the history of Grand Hotels in New Hampshire.

These luxury resorts soared in popularity at the turn of the 20th century. Today, there are only four hotels of their kind left in the state.

Grand hotels, which catered to more than 200 guests, were extravagant experiences that included decadent meals, recreational activities, nature outings and more. The hotels' clientele belonged to the wealthy elite, who sought an escape from a city life overwhelmed by urban pollution and sweltering summer heat.

The museum's curators tried to capture this essence by dressing the museum up to look like a grand hotel itself.



CREDIT SARA ERNST

One of the staff members wore bellhop-inspired clothing at the exhibit's opening event on Friday. A check-in counter greeted museum-goers as they entered the building.

The view of the White Mountains was projected on the wall, with old-style wallpaper plastered to the walls.

The grand hotels relied heavily on the train system, which transported guests from New York or Boston. But the advent of the automobile disrupted the tourism industry when travelers were offered more autonomy and a wider selection of options.

“People began to choose their own paths,” said Cynthia Robinson, the Director of the Museum. “Instead of being dropped right at the doorstep of the hotel, you could create your own vacation and stop at many stops, rather than coming to the grands hotel for the whole summer.”



While working on the exhibition, Robinson and her staff visited some of the grand hotels that are still operating. She says the four surviving resorts were able to combine traditional and modern components together.

“[The room design] is not all antiques, but it looks tasteful in the same way,” said Robinson.

“You go into the bathroom and then there’s a spa in your room. These are the kinds of thing that we like now. The hotel has adapted to that in order to make itself viable.”

The exhibit will be on display until September 12th.