

# Nobody Asked Me, But... No. 179: Hotel History: Julius Manger: One of The Greatest Hotel Owners of The Twentieth Century

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**THE MANGER**

by Stanley Turkel, CMHS

## Hotel History: Julius Manger (1868-1937):

Julius Manger was born in Boonville, Missouri. He graduated from the Tulane University Law School. At the age of twenty-eight, he engaged in the coffee business and was later associated with his brother, William, in the construction business in Galveston, Texas. They later located the hub of their business activities to New York City where they built more than 500 homes in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn. They also built the Builders Exchange Building in Manhattan and in 1907 traded it for the Plaza Hotel in Chicago, which was the beginning of their successful venture as hotel owners and operators.

When William died in 1928, the Manger hotel properties were valued at \$22 million and included luxury hotels in Chicago, Boston, Washington, D.C. and New York. At one time, the Manglers owned 18 hotels in New York alone and others in Washington, D.C., Boston, Massachusetts and Rochester, N.Y. Some of the most famous Manger Hotels were:

- Manger Vanderbilt Hotel, New York

Opened in 1912 as a luxury hotel with a bath in each of the 585 guestrooms, the 20-story Vanderbilt Hotel was built by Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt. It was designed by Warren & Wetmore, architects of the Commodore, Biltmore, Ritz Carlton Hotels in New York; Providence Biltmore; Mayflower, Washington, D.C.; Royal Hawaiian, Honolulu; Broadmoor, Colorado Springs; Homestead Hotel, Hot Springs, Arkansas and Grand Central Terminal.

The Vanderbilt was designed primarily as an apartment hotel with permanent residences to accommodate a new generation of the rich who wanted freedom from household responsibilities. In its time, the Vanderbilt was one of the most widely-admired buildings for its extensive use of terra cotta, fabricated by the New Jersey Terra Cotta Company. The Works Progress Administration's 1939 "New York City Guide" called its "an example of the eclectic use of Italian Renaissance, Mexican and Adam English design influences."

In April 1913, Vanderbilt and his valet boarded the RMS Lusitania for a trip to London. The night before the Lusitania set sail, Alfred and Margaret attended the theater, seeing the Frohman and Belasco production of *A Celebrated Case*. The following morning, the Vanderbilts awoke to find a startling notice in the newspapers. Framed in black, a warning from the Imperial German Embassy reminded travelers that a state of war existed between Germany and Great Britain and anyone sailing on a ship flying the English flag "do so at their own risk."

**NOTICE!**

**TRAVELLERS intending to embark on the Atlantic voyage are reminded that a state of war exists between Germany and her allies and Great Britain and her allies; that the zone of war includes the waters adjacent to the British Isles; that in accordance with formal notice given by the Imperial German Government, vessels flying the flag of Great Britain, or of any of her allies, are liable to destruction in those waters and that travellers sailing in the war zone on ships of Great Britain or her allies do so at their own risk.**

**IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY,  
WASHINGTON, D.C., APRIL 22, 1913.**

The Lusitania was torpedoed by a German U-boat and sunk. It was later reported that Alfred Vanderbilt removed his life jacket and personally strapped it on to a mother holding an infant. Unable to swim, his act of heroism sealed his own doom.

In 1941, the hotel was purchased from the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company by the Manger Corporation and renamed the Manger Vanderbilt.

Manger operated the Vanderbilt through the 1964 New York Worlds Fair but then closed the hotel. It was sold for \$3.625 million to an investment group headed by John E. Marqusee who converted the first six floors into offices and its upper floors into apartments.

- Gotham Hotel, New York

The Gotham was built in 1903 and was designed by the architectural firm of Hiss & Weekes in a Beaux-Arts style similar to the St. Regis Hotel across Fifth Avenue. In 1920, the hotel was sold to Julius and William Manger for about \$4 million. Manger operated the Gotham Hotel until 1932 when the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company brought foreclosure proceedings against it.

While the imposing neo-Italian Renaissance Gotham Hotel was one of the few structures on Fifth Avenue which recalled the golden age of luxury hotels, it never seemed to find the favor it sought in part because it was overshadowed by the subsequent openings of the St. Regis Hotel across Fifth Avenue and the Plaza Hotel four blocks to the north. The Gotham suffered from its proximity to the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church across 55<sup>th</sup> Street which prohibited liquor sales within 200 feet of a church.

- Manger Taft Hotel, New York

This 2,250-room hotel opened in 1926 with designs by architect H. Craig Severance who also designed 40 Wall Street, a 70-story skyscraper originally known as the Bank of Manhattan Trust building.

The Hotel Manger proclaimed itself as “the wonder hotel of New York- a modern marble palace with 2,000 outside rooms, servidors and circulating ice water.” The Manger got into trouble with the feds for reportedly serving alcohol during Prohibition. A raid resulted in the arrest of several bellboys, waiters, and two bootleggers, as well as the temporary padlocking of the building.

After Manger sold the hotel in 1931, it was renamed for President William Howard Taft. The new owners leased the southwest corner of the building for the lobby of the adjacent Roxy Theater.

The Taft Hotel was a Manhattan landmark for fifty years. In its heyday in the 1930s and 1940s, it was the largest hotel in midtown, famed for the big bands performing in its Taft Grill which featured live entertainment such as the George Hall Orchestra, Artie Shaw, Xavier Cugat, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Glenn Miller and Tony Pastor. Vincent Lopez’s dance band was one of the most popular of the 1920s and broadcast a radio show from the Taft.

To get an up-close description of life in the Taft, read “*Hotel Kid: A Times Square Childhood*” by Stephen Lewis whose father was the General Manager for thirty-three years. Filled with hotel anecdotes and childhood experiences, this delightful memoir is informative and amusing.

- Hotel Wolcott, New York

Although it opened on March 1, 1904, the Wolcott remains one of New York’s best-kept hotel bargain secrets. It was designed by one of the most famous hotel architects in the United States: John Hemenway Duncan (1855-1929). He also designed Grant’s Tomb, the Knox Hat Building (Fifth Avenue and 40<sup>th</sup> Street) and one of the greatest public monuments: the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument at Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn. In 1923, the hotel was purchased by the Wolcott Operating Corporation, run by William and Julius Manger. They owned and operated the Wolcott until 1932.

- Martha Washington Hotel, New York

The Martha Washington Hotel opened on March 2, 1903 as the first New York hotel operated exclusively for women. All employees were women with a hostess and chaperones in attendance at all times.

The opening of the original Martha Washington Hotel was the capstone of more than fifty years of poor treatment of women travelers in the United States. Prior to the Civil War and thereafter in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the lone women guest was looked upon with suspicion.

- Hay-Adams Hotel, Washington, D.C.

The Hay-Adams Hotel was built in 1928 to designs by Armenian-American architect Mihran Mesrobian in the Italian Renaissance style for developer Harry Wardman. Mesrobian also designed the Carlton Hotel and the Wardman Tower (now the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel). The Hay-Adams slogan is “where nothing is overlooked but the White House”.

The Hay-Adams Hotel was purchased in 1933 by Julius Manger who, at the time, owned 18 hotels in New York City. The Manger family owned the Hay-Adams from 1933 to 1973 during which time the hotel was known as the Manger Hay-Adams.

- Hotel Manger, Boston, Massachusetts

When it opened in August 1930, it was one of the finest hotels in Boston with an unbeatable locational advantage: adjacent to the North Station and the Boston Garden. It contained 500 rooms and advertised: “each room equipped with Tub and Shower; Built in Radio Speaker, (Three-Station Service); Tickless Electric Clock; Servidor; Circulating Ice Water; French Telephone; Full Length Mirror.... New England’s Most Modernly Equipped and Perfectly Appointed Hotel”.

The hotel’s name was changed to the Madison in 1958. Through its early life the hotel hosted National Basketball Association and National Hockey League teams scheduled to play at the adjacent old Boston Garden. The famous Beatles stayed there in 1964 and on September 12, 1964 held a press conference in the Madison Room of the hotel where three college students “crashed” and actually were able to ask the Beatles questions.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s the Madison Hotel, like much of the area around busy North Station, had lost its luster. By then, many of its more than 400 rooms housed homeless and low-income people. The Madison closed its doors in 1976. Ten years later, on Sunday, May 1, 1986 the hotel was demolished by implosion to make way for construction of the “Tip” O’Neil Federal Building, which now occupies the site. The old Boston Garden was torn down in the late 1990s after the construction of the Fleet Center.

- Seneca Hotel, Rochester, N.Y.

Rochester’s new hotel opened on September 14, 1908 in time for the State Democratic Convention. *The New York Times* (September 13, 1908) reported:

The hostelry in size will compare with the Hotel Astor in New York. Its architecture is in a general way French Renaissance....

The main entrance to the lobby of the hotel is from a private street. This provides a portecochere, which affords protection to those alighting from carriages in inclement weather....

By the early 1920s, a 10-story addition was added to the Seneca, making it Rochester’s largest hotel (500 rooms) and the meeting place for New York’s power brokers. The hotel would host many Democratic Party functions featuring such politicians as John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson.

In 1957, the Seneca was purchased by the Manger Hotel Company and became the Manger Seneca Hotel. The new owners renovated the building and introduced four new dining venues including an executive lounge for men. But with the expansion of the national highway system and the subsequent growth of roadside cabins, motels and motor inns, large urban hotels like the Manger Seneca could not survive. It was demolished in 1968.

Julius Manger died on March 29, 1937 in his suite at the Hay-Adams Hotel. He was 69 years old. He was buried in the Manger Mausoleum in the Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, N.Y. Architect/designer Franklin Naylor built the mausoleum in 1927 for Dominico Dumbra, but it was purchased by Julius Manger in 1935. It was one of the last hurrahs of the Golden Age of the Mausoleum which ran from around the end of the Civil War to the Great Depression. It is one of the most elegantly-crafted mausoleums in the United States and a suitable resting place for one of the greatest hotelmen of his time.

\*excerpted from "Great American Hoteliers Volume 2: Pioneers of the Hotel Industry" AuthorHouse 2016

### **My Newest Book**

"Built To Last: 100+ Year-Old Hotels West of the Mississippi" is being printed and will be available later in June 2017.

Ian Schrager writes in the Foreword:

"This particular book completes the trilogy of 182 hotel histories of classic properties of 50 rooms or more... I sincerely feel that every hotel school should own sets of these books and make them required reading for their students and employees."

### **My Five Published Hotel Books**

- [\*Great American Hoteliers: Pioneers of the Hotel Industry\*](#) (2009)

*During the thirty years prior to the Civil War, Americans built hotels larger and more ostentatious than any in the rest of the world. These hotels were inextricably intertwined with American culture and customs but were accessible to average citizens. Stephen Rushmore writes in the Foreword: "Drawing from more than 40 years of industry experience including managing some of the largest New York City hotels, Turkel captures the spirit of each of these pioneers and relates their achievements to important lessons that we can learn from."*

- [\*Built To Last: 100+ Year-Old Hotels in New York\*](#) (2011)

*These thirty-two featured hotels have defied the passage of time for a variety of reasons, many explicable, some beyond explanation, all miraculous. Bjorn Hanson, Ph.D. writes in the Foreword: "Stanley Turkel is unique in his passion about the history of the United States lodging industry; he pursues and shares this passion by compiling information about great hoteliers and hotels for articles, updates for his clients, and this, the second of his two hotel books."*

- [\*Built To Last: 100+ Year-Old Hotels East of the Mississippi\*](#) (2013)

*All the eighty-six hotels featured in this book have unique and singular stories describing their creation, survival and revival. The book contains eighty-six antique postcard illustrations and a Foreword by Joseph McInerney, President and CEO Emeritus of the American Hotel & Lodging Association: "Stanley Turkel is one of the best writers I know at capturing our history – the "old" – and infusing it with new life and relevance."*

- [Hotel Mavens: Lucius M. Boomer, George C. Boldt and Oscar of the Waldorf](#) (2014)

*Hotel Mavens tells the interesting stories of the following pioneers and the hotels they built and operated:*

- *Lucius Boomer, one of the most famous hoteliers of his time, was Chairman of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel Corporation.*
- *George C. Boldt who was the genius of the original Waldorf-Astoria. It was said of him that he made innkeeping a profession and, more than any man, was the creator of the modern American hotel.*
- *Oscar of the Waldorf was the superstar of his time and one of the stalwarts who managed both the original and the current Waldorf-Astoria.*

Sam Roberts in the [New York Times](#) wrote:

*"Nostalgia for the city's caravansaries will be kindled by Stanley Turkel's*

- [Hotel Mavens: Lucius M. Boomer, George C. Boldt and Oscar of the Waldorf"](#).

*The fact-filled book by Mr. Turkel, an industry consultant, explains, among other things, the history of the hyphen (recently excised) in the name of the Waldorf Astoria, which inspired a mid-block street and even a song."*

- [Great American Hoteliers Volume 2: Pioneers of the Hotel Industry](#) (2016)

*Lawrence P. Horwitz, Executive Director, Historic Hotels of America, writes in the Foreword: "This book is an excellent history book with insights into seventeen of the great innovators and visionaries of the hotel industry and their inspirational stories."*

*These important and largely unknown biographies include Stewart William Bainum, Curtis Leroy Carlson, Cecil Burke Day, Louis Jacob Dinkler, Eugene Chase Eppley, Roy C. Kelley, Arnold S. Kirkeby, Julius Manger, Robert R. Meyer, Albert Pick, Jr., Jay Pritzker, Harris Rosen, Ian Schrager, Vernon B. Stouffer, William Cornelius Van Horne, Robert E. Woolley and Stephen Allen Wynn.*

**All of these books can be ordered from AuthorHouse by visiting [www.stanleyturkel.com](http://www.stanleyturkel.com) and clicking on the book's title.**

#### **Attorneys Take Note:**

For the past twenty-four years I have served as an expert witness in more than 40 hotel-related cases.

My extensive hotel operating experience is beneficial in cases involving:

- hurricane damage and/or business interruption cases



- slip and fall accidents
- wrongful deaths
- fire and carbon monoxide injuries
- franchisee/franchisor disputes
- management contract disputes
- hotel security issues
- dram shop requirements

Don't hesitate to call me on 917-628-8549 to discuss any hotel-related litigation support assignments.

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## About Stanley Turkel

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Stanley Turkel was designated as the 2014 and the 2015` Historian of the Year by Historic Hotels of America, the official program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This award is presented to an individual for making a unique contribution in the research and presentation of hotel history and whose work has encouraged a wide discussion and a greater understanding and enthusiasm for American History.

Turkel is a well-known consultant in the hotel industry. He operates his hotel consulting practice serving as an expert witness in hotel-related cases, providing asset management and hotel franchising consultation. He is certified as a Master Hotel Supplier Emeritus by the Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Lodging Association.

Stanley Turkel is one of the most widely-published authors in the hospitality field. More than 325 articles on various hotel subjects have been posted in hotel magazines and on the Hotel-Online, BlueMauMau, HotelNewsResource and eTurboNews websites. Two of his hotel books have been promoted, distributed and sold by the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute ("Great American Hoteliers: Pioneers of the Hotel Industry" and "Built To Last: 100+ Year-Old Hotels East of



the Mississippi”). A third hotel book (“Built To Last: 100+ Year-Old Hotels in New York”) was called "passionate and informative" by the *New York Times*. His fourth hotel book was described by the *New York Times*: “Nostalgia for the City’s caravansaries will be kindled by Stanley Turkel’s... fact-filled... “Hotel Mavens: Lucius M. Boomer, George C. Boldt and Oscar of the Waldorf”. In his fifth hotel book, “Great American Hoteliers Volume 2: Pioneers of the Hotel Industry”, Lawrence P. Horwitz, Executive Director, Historic Hotels of America writes in the Foreword:

*“The author, Stanley Turkel is a great story teller.... This book is about risk takers, dreamers, inventors, entrepreneurs, innovators, visionaries, leaders and motivators. This is a collection of stories about hotel pioneers with a passion for inventing new ways to create demand for their product.”*

All of these books can be ordered from the publisher (AuthorHouse) by visiting [www.stanleyturkel.com](http://www.stanleyturkel.com) and clicking on the book title.

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