

The Malone Telegram & NNY360 PRESENT



Remembering the **FLANAGAN**



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Stories and photos compiled by Telegram editor Richard Rosentreter

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

The Flanagan was more than just a building

Malone's Busiest Corner—Malone, N. Y.

**RICHARD
ROSENRETER**


The Flanagan hotel holds a special place in the hearts of many Malonians – even though a large segment of the local population never experienced the landmark and social hub during its heyday. Even I, a transplant to the North Country, can only imagine just how important the Flanagan once was – but I do know how important memories are for a community.

When I moved here, the Flanagan was just a shell of its former glory – and when the time for its demolition arrived, I knew a special keep-

sake section was needed to commemorate and honor the former landmark.

The Flanagan was built in 1914, and from the very beginning it captured the wonder and awe of the North Country. It evolved to be a social mecca for the community – until it fell into years of blight, its lifespan finally expired and needed to be demolished.

It should be noted, and kudos given, to all the valiant efforts by those who wanted to renovate the Flanagan and bring it back to life after the tragic fire in 1997.

But returning the Flanagan its former glory was not to be – and as the hotel was demolished earlier this year, within the rubble laid so many fond memories, whether it was the

social gatherings, organizational meetings, to special occasions such as weddings, anniversaries of family events or by those travelers who stayed the night or longer.

In the Flanagan's early years when the train stopped next to the hotel, one can imagine those getting off and entering the hotel after a long ride and relax for a cocktail and meal, and the memories of the experience.

There were memories too for all those who worked within the hotel – from the barber to the bartender to the bookstore and gift shop workers – and those who catered to the guests to make sure their stay was comfortable.

Indeed, the Flanagan was a special place in its heyday – and hopefully as one flips

through the pages of this special commemorative publication, a sense of its glory is felt.

The story of the Flanagan can take up a book, and with the limited space of this publication, I wanted to capture the essence of its history from the eyes of those who could provide a sufficient perspective. It contains stories of the beginning of the hotel, its opening, its famous guests, commentary from Melanie Grinstead, who lived at the hotel as a child growing up as her parents owned the Flanagan, to local photographer Rick Auger who documented many events, to a curious Franklin Academy graduate who produced a documentary with fresh eyes.

There are several other features within these pages – and

each one is geared to capture the essence of the Flanagan, each designed to shed light once more on the grandeur that was the Flanagan hotel. Hopefully, that goal was achieved.

A special thank you to the staff at the Franklin County Historical and Museum Society, including Phyllis Carley and Carol Poole, and the Wead Library for helping me gather some of the material for this special tribute to the Flanagan.

Malone's Flanagan hotel was more than just a structure made of brick, stone and mortar – it was a community space – and not just a place, but a destination. The Flanagan may be gone, but will never be forgotten in the history of Malone.

Before it became ‘The Flanagan’

By **RICHARD ROSENTERER**

The corner of Main and Elm streets was always a focal point of Malone – and even before the Hotel Flanagan opened its doors and became a local landmark, the location had two places travelers could stay the night.

There was a time the site was empty and the main landmark was the Memorial Park located across the street where the Howard House, formerly known as the Ferguson House, was also located.

Before becoming a hotel, the site once had a building that housed a meat market, gun shop and harness shop.

Frederick Seaver in his classic book detailing local history “Historical sketches of Franklin county and its several towns,” which was published in 1918 – four years after the Hotel Flanagan opened - mentions the Flanagan in a section titled “Hotels.”

One of the early hotels on the

site where the Flanagan would eventually be built was known as “The Miller House,” which according to Seaver, for a long time was THE hotel of the town. It was built by W.D. House, who was a tailor, he wrote.

“The Miller House, originally a dwelling house, enlarged and converted into a hotel by Orlando Furness,” Seaver wrote, eventually becoming the Flanagan House, and “for a long time was the leading inn of Malone,” and it was “there that Alexander Flanagan made his reputation as a landlord.”

Seaver also gives a brief run-down of the “new” Flanagan, dubbing it the “most modern and probably the largest hotel in Northern New York.”

Indeed it was.

Seaver duly noted that the hotel contained “over a hundred rooms, and every item of equipment is high class. The cost of the house, including site, was over a hundred thousand dollars.”



Before becoming a hotel, the site at the corner of Main and Elm streets once housed a meat market, gun shop and harness shop. Image courtesy of the Franklin County Historical Museum and Society

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This undated photo shows the corner of Main and Elm streets well before the Hotel Flanagan was built. Image courtesy of the Franklin County Historical Museum and Society



The Miller House at the corner of Main and Elm streets. Image courtesy of the Franklin County Historical Museum and Society



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Hotel Flanagan opening dinner was a gala event



The special publication printed to commemorate the gala opening dinner for the Hotel Flanagan.

By RICHARD ROSENTRER

The opening of the Hotel Flanagan was official with its gala dinner held on July 1, 1914 and it was truly a momentous occasion.

“The opening was a great social event and everybody went who could, from in and out of town,” The Malone Farmer newspaper reported after the dinner as people came from across the region to be at the new Malone centerpiece.

On the day of the grand opening event, The Malone Farmer mentioned it in a section called “Our Man About



The Hotel Flanagan in 1914. Photo courtesy of the Franklin County Historical Museum and Society

Town,” and included some commentary on the village of Malone, and predicted just how popular the hotel would become.

“Our Main street is an eyesore as a road and other village streets need improving; but the general appearance of the village, with its splendid

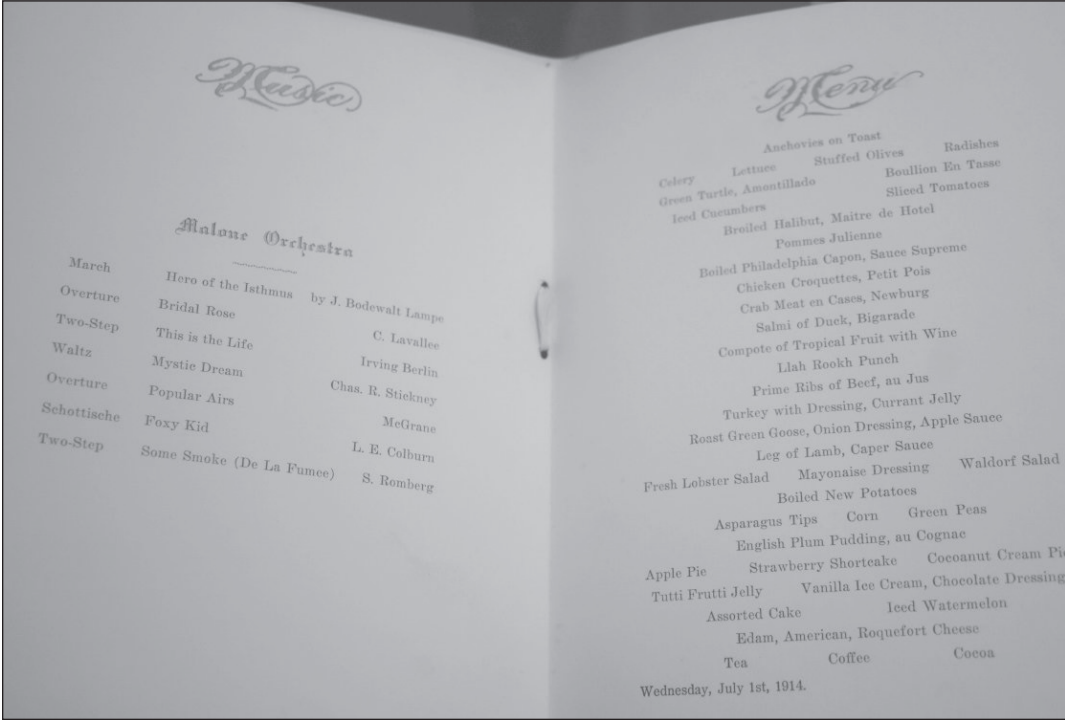
shade and bloom, its neatly kept lawns, its spacious public grounds and buildings is superb. Every stranger who has been here recently has

exclaimed over its charm of situation,” the article reads. “The big, handsome Flana-

See GALAT 5

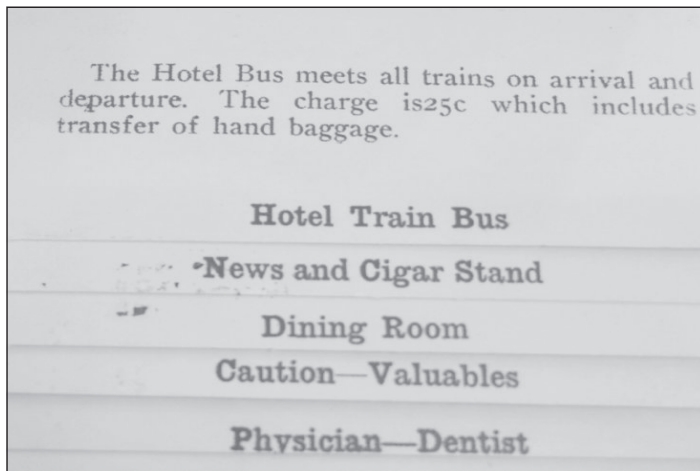


The dining room of the Flanagan. Photo courtesy of the Franklin County Historical Museum and Society



The programme included the menu for the opening dinner.

Flanagan pamphlet provides historic image of Malone



One of the many bits of information in the pamphlet. Richard Rosentreter photo

By RICHARD ROSENTERTER
rosentreter@mtelegam.com

The early days of the Flanagan also represented a time when Malone was a flourishing city, and its shops and businesses were part of that growth.

Guests at the Flanagan still required basic comforts and in many cases, some needs that only local shops and businesses could provide as people just didn't travel with all the basics or luxuries travelers today take for granted by packing them away in the car trunk, suitcase or even shopping bag.

To help inform its guests of the local businesses that could provide them with their needs, the Flanagan published a small pamphlet that worked like an index tool, full of the hotels amenities and some advertising of the day.

Among the services one could pay for at the cost of 25 cents was having the hotel bus pick a guest up and the fee included the "transfer of hand baggage."

The dining room operated under what was known as the "American Plan," listing the breakfast, dinner (listed at the time of lunch) and supper (for what is known today as dinner).

The pamphlet, among other things, advertised taxi service, promoting "Seven Passenger Sedans" and "Special Rates for Trips," with a phone number simply listed as "Phone 636."

Guest were directed to a top location of Grover's Gift Shop (NeR Grand Theatre), where they could purchase "Pictures, Bridge Prizes, Book Ends, Trays, Greeting Cards, Mottoes, Souvenirs, Latest in Dresses Costume, Jewellery, Bags and Dainties," along with "Gifts From 14 Countries."

For those fortunate enough to be traveling by automobile, guests were directed to Willard Battery Service for "Gasoline, Oils, Grease, and Alemite Service" and Crank Case Service."

See IMAGE 6



An advertisement for hats of the day in the pamphlet given to guests during the Flanagan's early years. Richard Rosentreter photo

Gala

From T4

gan Hotel surprises them, but they are confident that it will be filled as soon as its elegant situation and appointments become known."

The gala dinner was also described in detail.

"The new Flanagan Hotel will open today with a splendid public dinner at six

o'clock. There will be music by an orchestra, the beautiful interior will be appropriately decorated and the event promises to be a memorable one. Many reservations for the dinner have already been received and there will be a brilliant company. There will be at least two shifts at the tables, the guests designated when they prefer to be served."

The newspaper also described the special publica-

tion printed to commemorate the opening event (see photo).

"The bill of fare is a beautiful book upon the covers of which are embossed in gold letters, "Opening Dinner, The Flanagan," Malone, N.Y. The center of the cover bears a beautiful photogravure of the hotel, a perfect picture of the great structure without the awnings," it reads. "Over and under the picture are figures 1857 and 1914, rep-

resenting the date when the family first entered the hotel business in Malone and the year of the opening of the big building. On the fly leaf inside is a likelike photo of the late A.R. Flanagan. The menu is a magnificent one and besides the dinner bill contains the orchestra programme."

The programme listed the type of music and song name to be performed by the Malone Orchestra, and was as follows in order: March,

"Hero of the Isthmus"; Overture, "Bridal Rose"; Two-Step, "This is the Life"; Waltz, "Mystic Dream"; Overture, "Popular Airs"; Schottische, "Foxy Kid"; and Two-Step, "Some Smoke (De La Fumee)."

It also pointed out that the "programme" would someday be a collector's item: "It is a souvenir which many of the guests will desire to keep," the article reads.

More than 350 guests attended the event.

Image

From T5

It also pitched its "Ladies Rest Room." (It did not list a men's rest room!)

There was also one day laundry available (probably a luxury back in the day), and if a guest dropped their laundry off at the desk before 9 a.m., "Taylor's City Laundry will see you get it before 6:00 p.m. same day."

The Buttick Book Store had a spot, and said it carried "all the New York Dailies and Tabloids, also daileis of Albany, Boston, Burlington, Syracuse. Also daily local Newspapers."

Another handy bit of information was the area bus schedule. Of note, Bob's Bus Line would leave Malone at 7:15 a.m. and arrive in Massena by 4:15 p.m.!

But the Flanagan also promoted Malone itself, and gave the following description of the growing city:

"Malone is really (sic) a big little City, provided with every modern convenience. It has up to date Schools, magnificent Churches, big modern Hotels, splendid shops, good roads, a perfect spring water supply. It is well governed and has excellent roads for touring," it reads, adding information of how the North Country city was building

up.

"Malone has increased in size and population 25% during the last decade. The manufacturies are diversified, and include paper and pulp, lumber, wool, clothing, textiles, leather, castings, machinery, Ice Cream, freight cars, bronze and aluminum powders," it reads, and yes, it has ice cream capitalizd!

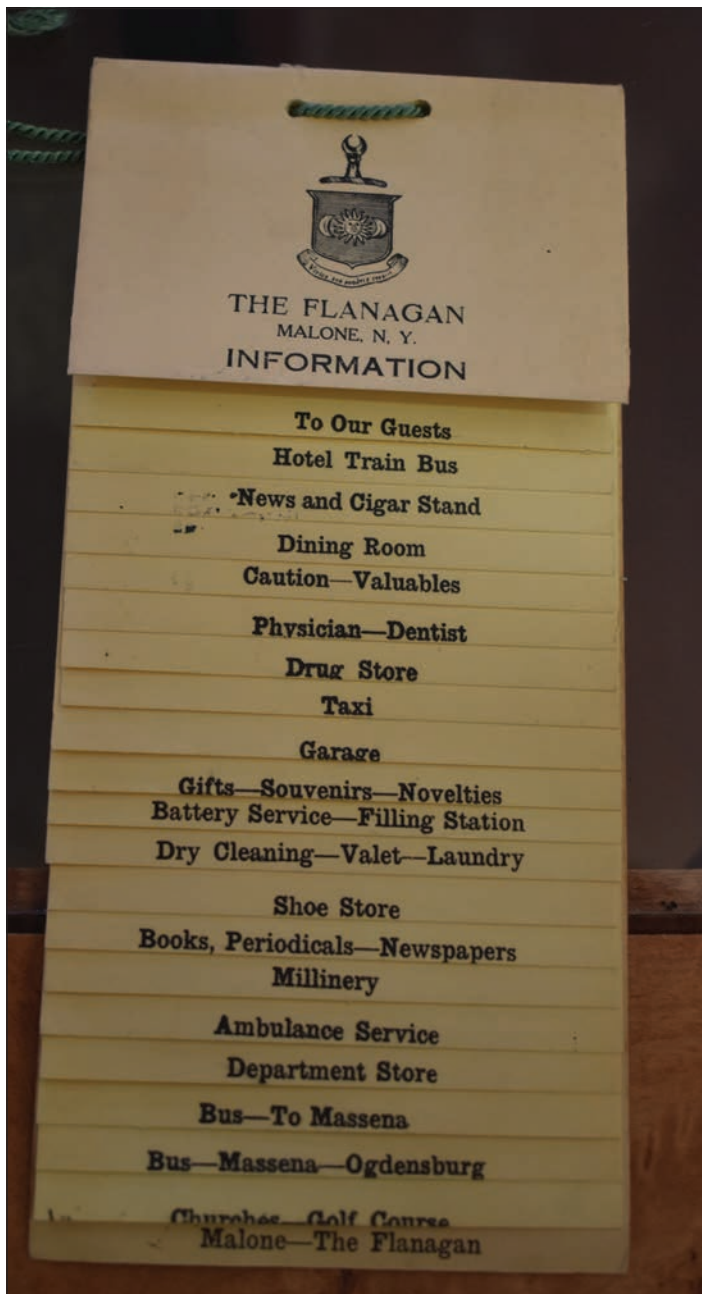
"It is of easy access to Canada and particularly Montreal Canada's metropolis. Good roads lead to Plattsburgh, Placid and Saranac Lake."

The pamphlet also provided some history: "The old Miller House, on the site of the present Hotel Flanagan, was where the late A.R. Flanagan and his good wife Mrs. Mary E. Flanagan started their hotel work. They were pioneer hotel people of this section. This house was conducted by A.R. Flanagan until 1871 at which time they moved into the

Ferguson House which was one of the best equipped hotels of the time. It was destroyed by fire in 1888.

The Flanagan Hotel on Main Street was conducted by W.R. and S.J. Flanagan until 1891. After that the firm name was S.J. and J.A. Flanagan and they leased the Howard Hotel and they conducted that until the year 1914.

The present Hotel Flanagan conducted by S.J., J.A. and J.J. Flanagan was begun in 1913 and completed in 1914 and is one of the leading hotels in the north country. The Flanagan family has always been recognized as one of the leading hotel families of the State of New York. At the present time the family name is one of the oldest in the hotel work."



The pamphlet given to guests at the Flanagan contained a variety of helpful information about Malone. Richard Rosentreter photo

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Some of the Flanagan’s famous guests

By **RICHARD ROSENTERER**
The Malone Telegram

The Hotel Flanagan had many notable guests walk within its confines throughout its history – some staying a night or two, some a more prolonged stay, while others may have just been passing through.

The list of notables include: Babe Ruth, Teddy Roosevelt, Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Tom Mix (actor and the star of many early Western films, Eleanor Roosevelt, Harvey Firestone (yes, of tire fame), Bobby Kennedy, Nelson Rockefeller, Helen O’Connell (singer and actor), John Burroughs, Henry Morgenthau (former United States Secretary of the Treasury), mobster Dutch Schultz - and the many entertainers that performed at the Franklin County Fair.

When Edison visited Malone, he was already a famous inventor and his visit was commemorated by Del Forkey, the editor of the Malone Evening Telegram, in a 1955 commentary



Babe Ruth stands in front of the Hotel Flanagan in an undated photo.

“Malone was host briefly to three of the world’s great in science and industry when Thomas A. Edison, John Burroughs, the naturalist and Harvey Firestone, the pioneer tire-maker, paused here in 1916, on an automobile jaunt that was considered quite and intrepid undertaking in those days of hard-starting motors and frequent blowouts,” he wrote. “It was natural that these celebrities were greeted here by the late Jack Flanagan of the Flanagan Hotel for he was famed as a host wherever the name of Malone



The front page of the Malone Evening Telegram when Dutch Schultz was on trial in Malone.

was known.” According to Del Forkey, the group were “induced to pose for a photograph at the hotel entrance—a comparatively shabby appearing trio with Chasm Falls mud still clinging to their shoes. All three were roughly dressed for their outdoor life.”



Several of the Hotel Flanagan’s famous visitors posed for this photograph in front of the main entrance on September 5th, 1916. They are (from left to right), Mr. Harvey Firestone, founder of Firestone Tires, Mr. John Burroughs, the preeminent American naturalist, Thomas Edison, and Jack Flanagan, the Hotel’s proprietor. Image courtesy of the Franklin County Historical Museum and Society.



The Flanagan postcards over the years





The view from the porch of the Flanagan hotel during its early days. Franklin County Historical Museum and Society.



The top of the Flanagan can be seen in this photo dating to the 1940s-50s. Franklin County Historical Museum and Society.

Flanagan's heyday

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Brochure helps recapture Flanagan memories



The Flanagan's dining "Jade Room" appears in the brochure.

By RICHARD ROSENTRER

Brochures and travel guides. They can be seen on racks at visitor centers and other places frequented by travelers to advertise attractions and resting stops by regional businesses and hotels – and Malone's Hotel Flanagan once too had such informational items.

The Telegram located an undated brochure at the Franklin County Historical Society – but gauging by the prices and a piece of information, it appears to be from the 1940s.

The brochure lists "Under New Ownership – Management," since March 1939, the Hotel Flanagan has established a new standard of service for the visitor of the North Country. Your patronage will be appreciated." Right after that, it lists Raymond McIntire Grinstead as the president-managing director.

But one giveaway as to the date are the prices. The brochure boasts of the Flanagan being the "North Country's Greatest Hotel Value," and Once a Guest, Always a Guest." There is also a block that advertises "Guaranteed Rates," which were as follows:

- Room with running water, \$1.50 to \$2; for two persons, \$2.50 to \$4.

- Room, with private bath, \$2 to \$3; for two persons, \$3 to \$6.

- Special weekly and monthly rates.

Attraction points

Like most brochures, the one found on the Flanagan focuses on the reasons travelers should stay at that location, and the goal

was to make visitors from other areas feel comfortable, and made it clear all types of people were welcome:

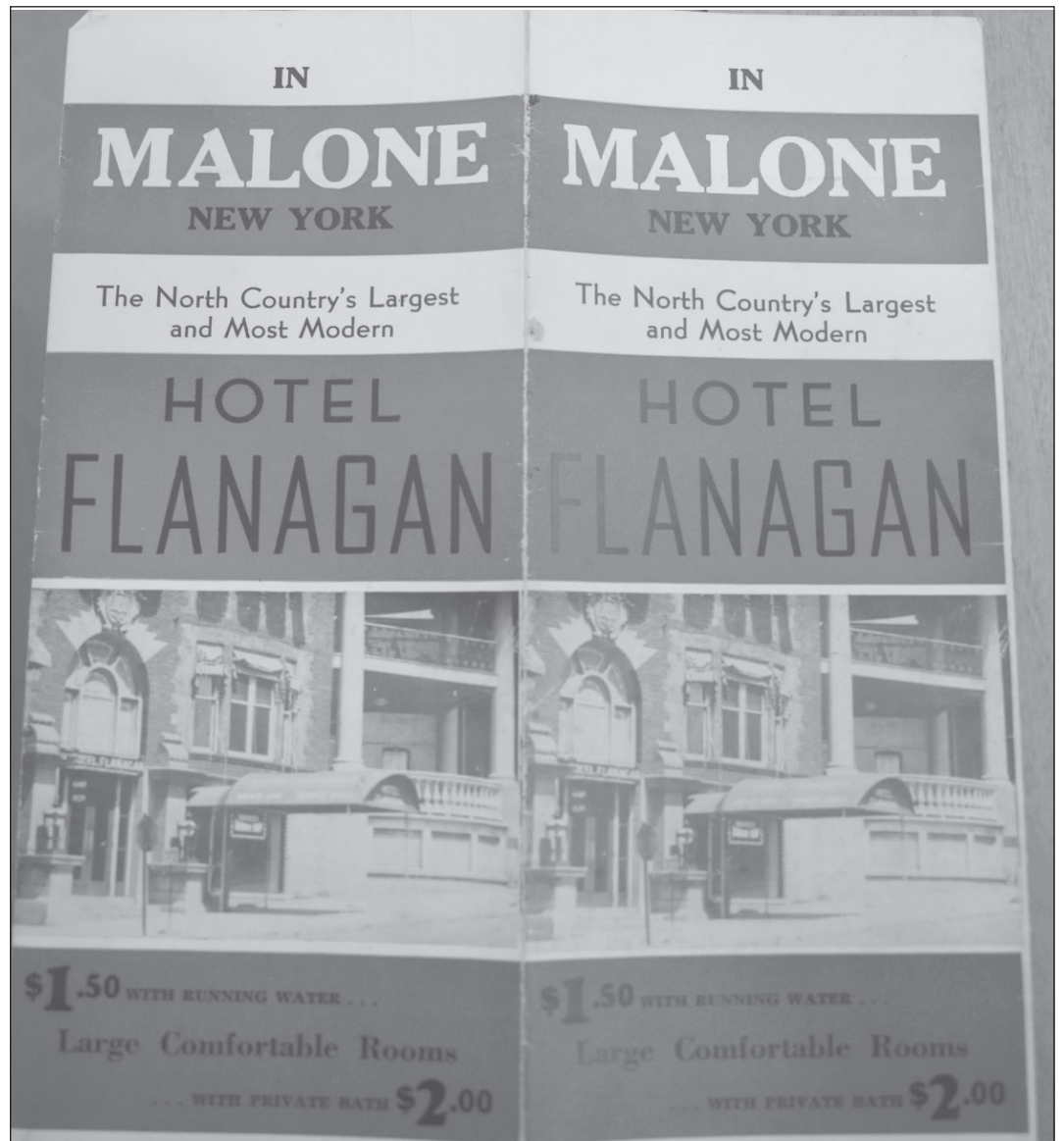
"The tourist ... who perhaps has never visited Malone or stayed at the 'New' Hotel Flanagan is most welcome. Please come in just as you are. Never mind your wrinkled clothes or dusty countenances. We know you have had a long drive and are perhaps tired. We want you to feel right at home at the Hotel Flanagan," the brochure reads.

The Telegram wasn't able to locate many photos of the hotel's interior during its heyday, but the brochure did have a handful and did an ample job promoting and describing the rooms and hotel accommodations.

"Comfortable lobby, newly furnished and redecorated, with a large fireplace; the beautiful Jade Room where good food at reasonable prices attracts from miles around; The Ship's Grill where the most delicious meals are served at Coffee Shop prices – and where choice beverages may be enjoyed to select entertainment and you may dance if you wish, just as if you were on the upper deck of a real luxurious yacht enjoying the lure and enchantment of the south seas."

It is interesting to note is that there was separate bar service for men and women.

The brochure specifically lists the "popular Men's Bar on the lower lobby floor, with direct entrance from the street as well as from the hotel lobby, for Gentlemen Only. Ladies are served in the Ship's Grill, and in the new Jade Room."



This brochure for the Flanagan hotel had no date of production, but every indication dates it to the 1940s. Richard Rosentreter photos



This image of the Flanagan's lobby appears in the brochure.

Growing up in the Flanagan: A unique perspective



Pictured are the Grinstead girls who grew up in the Flanagan hotel, from left, Martha, Melanie, Sally and Laurie. Family photos

By **RICHARD ROSENTERER**

Most of the people who have fond memories the Flanagan's heyday were its many guests and visitors – or the many local residents who worked or socialized at the community hub the hotel was for Malone. However, there was a handful of individuals who offer a unique perspective of the hotel's glory

years and comes from the family who called it home for many years – and spent their formative years at the Flanagan.

That group was the Grinstead family, who owned the hotel for many years, and for a long span was also managed by Bob Grinstead, who lived there with his wife Geraldine (Gerry), and the couple's daughters: Martha, Melanie, Sally and Laurie.



The wedding photo of Geraldine “Gerry” and Bob Grinstead inside on the Flanagan’s first floor balcony that looked over the lobby. That occasion is the first memory of Melanie Grinstead.

The Telegram was able to connect with one of them, Melanie, who spoke about many of the fond memories

she has of growing up at the Flanagan as a full-time resident.

Melanie Grinstead said she

lived in the Flanagan from the age of nine to 18, when she moved to Montreal, Canada for nurses training at St Mary's Hospital in 1966.

“I have so many happy memories living in the Flanagan,” she said, “but obviously it is hard to remember them all.”

Earliest memory

Wedding celebrations were a big part of the Flanagan's lineup, and the focal point of some of the best memories, including for Melanie.

“My earliest memories of the Flanagan are probably attending my parents wedding on August 6, 1955. My mother, Geraldine Burton Grinstead, a widow with two daughters, Melanie and Sally, married Robert Grinstead that day,” she wrote in an email.

According to Melanie, her grandfather owned the Flanagan at that time, and after the wedding, the family moved to Springfield, Massachusetts where her father Bob was assistant manager of the Sher-



The Grinstead family and friends during a Christmas celebration.



This photo of the lobby of the Flanagan hotel shows the owner Bob Grinstead, second from the left, talking to an unknown man during a fire drill. Rick Auger photo

Growing up

From T12

aton Hotel.

"In 1957 we moved back to Malone with the newest addition to the family, my younger sister Laurie," Melanie wrote. "We moved into an apartment on the fourth floor where we lived for a short time until our first floor apartment was ready. In 1961, Martha became another addition to our family."

An extended family

For a youngster growing up in a busy hotel mecca, it was more than just an adventure – it was an ongoing social environment. And in a phone in-

terview, Melanie spoke fondly about the friendliness and atmosphere within the hotel confines that she compared to having one big extended family. Staff members were more than just hotel workers and Melanie said the hotel was full of "kind people."

"They treated us like their own kids. I remember Tiny and Sam, the maintenance men. Tiny would show me how to paint. The waitresses – if we were eating in the dining room, they were just so nice," she said, adding to the list of those who worked for her father, such as bartenders Mae Atherton and Bobby Smith, the chef Charlie Beedy, the night clerk Francis, waitresses Winnie and Ida, and Marion, who worked in the kitchen.

Some childhood memories focus on scary moments, and Melanie's experiences were



Bob Grinstead. Provided photo

no different – and one involved the perceived danger of dark places.

"I remember going one evening with my father to the 'scary' basement and watching him shovel coal into that huge furnace or my mother sending me to the 'scary' attic to get something from our

locker," she said.

Then there was a time when the hotel provided refuge during the region's harsh winter.

"I remember a bad ice storm in the 1960s where a lot of people rented rooms as the hotel had power," she said.

Melanie also remembered having several babysitting jobs while her parents went to the "South of the Border" bar at the hotel.

"I remember the bar and the restaurant being on the ground floor with entrances near Bernie Fitzpatrick's barbershop and another door on Main Street. Mae the bartender was a very nice lady, and she had a parakeet," she said.

But one lasting, special memory for Melanie, was coming home from school. While other children would go back to a "normal" household

setting, she would come home to a beehive of activity along with an entire social network.

"I remember coming home from school and walking through the lobby and being greeted by several of the ladies who lived in the apartments that my father had converted from single hotel rooms," she said. "We'd come home from school, and there were maybe eight of them sitting in the lobby. They'd go 'How was your day' and 'Did you like school?' I especially remember Miss Duffy asking me how my day was. It was a special place, it really was."

Melanie said the other kids in school didn't really treat her different because she lived at the town's centerpiece hotel, but they did inquire: "You live in a hotel, what's it like?"

Growing up

From T13

She'd simply reply, "Well, it's home."

The hotel staff not only played sort of a parental role, but they also kept a watchful eye, and even sometimes covered for the children.

"If we sneaked in or something they'd sort of cover for us," Melanie said, adding she wasn't the one who would take part in any shenanigans. "I was the oldest and more of the goody-two shoes."

According to Melanie, growing up in that social environment did have a positive impact on her life, and taught her one of life's biggest lessons.

"I think it taught me how to be polite and respectful, and you had to socialize to be polite, say 'Hello. How are you?'" she said. "It's how I was taught to socialize properly."

A special view

The living quarters for the Grinstead was a prime location in the Flanagan, it was a large apartment at the hotel with a big window facing Main Street, according to Melanie, who said as she got older, she'd have friends over on a regular basis.

A truly special time was when the Winter Carnival was held and the main festivities were visible right from their window – and a balcony that was the place to be.

"I remember watching the Winter Carnival parades from our apartment. In the front of the building there was a balcony and an entry way – the upper balcony was basically our living room," Melanie said, calling it a special experience. "During the Winter Carnival Parade, or anything like that, we might have had twenty people up there watching because it was all open."

Unfortunately, the number of people in the area who possess memories of the Flanagan's rich past are shrinking.

"There are other people in Malone who know what the



Melanie Grinstead in the "South of Border" lounge in the Flanagan. Provided photo

hotel was like years ago," Melanie said, adding that the best years were prior to 1990. "The majority of people in Malone, unless you're sixty and older, you don't even know what the hotel was – you don't have a clue."

Moving on

After she went off to Montreal to train as a nurse in 1966, Melanie never returned much to the Flanagan. When she heard of the fire, although saddened, she said the former glory of the place she once called home was just a distant memory.

In 1997 when the Flanagan was catastrophically damaged by fire, she couldn't really remember how she heard the news.

"I was living in Montreal, my parents didn't own the hotel anymore. I don't remember how I heard really, maybe a friend called. I never went back to the hotel much, if at all, after it was sold. I cut ties with the hotel after my father sold it," she said. "I was sorry when I heard about the fire, but I had also had heard about people doing drugs and it had a totally different clientele than when my father owned it. I remember being very sad seeing how the hotel was something I no longer was proud to be associated with, how I had hoped after the fire that it might have been restored."

"Unfortunately restoration did not occur and now it is time to say goodbye to the Flanagan and to construct something that Malone WILL be proud of," Melanie added. "But I still have so many happy memories."

Former bartender provides insight on his time working at the Flanagan

Editor's note: This article was first published in the Malone Telegram in 2022. It has been edited slightly to reflect changes since its first writing.

By BLAINE LAVOIE

MALONE — A longtime fixture in Malone, Robert Smith, 88, sat down with the Malone Telegram and the Franklin County Historical and Museum Society to document his experience working as a bartender at the Flanagan Hotel.

"I worked there for at least 30 years," Smith said. "I left a few times to go to California and every time I returned, they always hired me back. Before bartending at 'South of the Border' in the hotel, I started off doing janitorial work there, doing dishes, mopping, and buffing the floor. I retired at 62 years old."

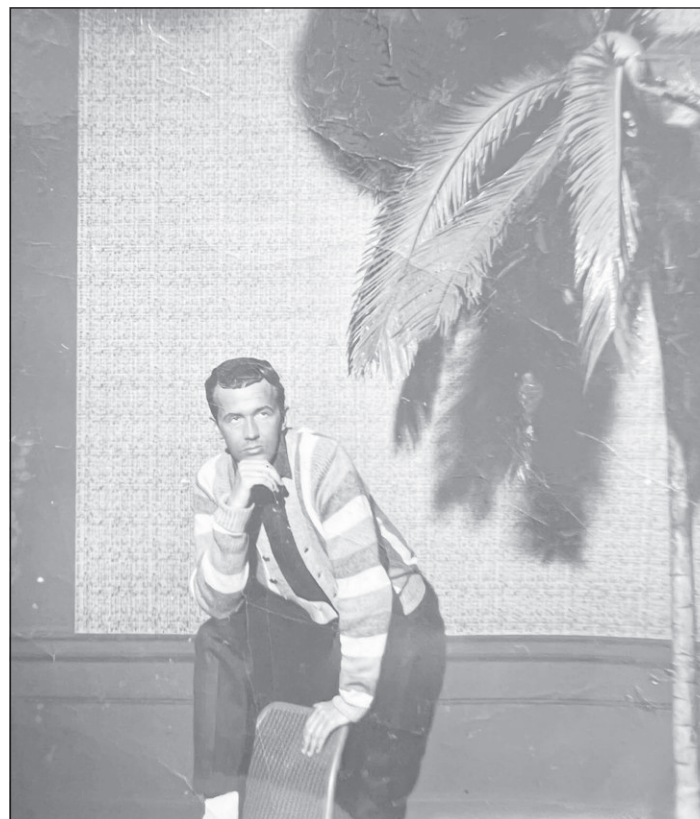
Employed at the Flanagan Hotel for 30 years, Smith had to leave a number of times due to being called upon by the U.S. Army. He was drafted in 1958 and was stationed in Fort Dix, N.J., San Antonio and Germany.

"My mother lived at the hotel working part time doing dish-ing, cooking, what have you. I had my own room when I got out of the Army and she was down the hall in her own apartment," Smith said. "The apartments there were really nice."

According to a brochure that advertised the Flanagan Hotel, the 105-year-old hotel also had a beauty shop, a barber shop, a travel agency, a fashion shop and a terminal for Greyhound buses. A much smaller hotel was opened on the site by the Flanagan family in 1857.

"It had gorgeous decor on the interior. The hotel was a landmark," Smith said.

"When fair week came around, everyone stayed at the Flanagan because they didn't have RVs at the time. I served celebrities such as Patsy Cline, Jim Reeves, Grant Price, and Magic Tom (Auburn) came up every year for the Winter Carnival," Smith said. "The carnival was held in Malone every winter and the lounge and dining rooms would be filled with



Robert Smith during his time bartending at the "South of the Border Bar" inside the Flanagan Hotel. Photo courtesy of Robert Smith

people. The ballroom windows would be crowded to watch the parade travel down Main Street. Bagpipers from Canada would come in and play throughout the day. That was one of the best times."

Other famous guests who stayed at the hotel were baseball legend Babe Ruth, U.S. Rep. William A. Wheeler, Teddy and Eleanor Roosevelt, Robert F. Kennedy and Nelson A. Rockefeller.

"The lady that ran the bar told me about crime boss Dutch Schultz and how he rented out the whole fourth floor for him and his henchmen. She told me that he used to tip \$100 bills to the waitresses," Smith said.

In the Flanagan's prime, it was said by locals and travelers alike that it was the largest hotel north of Albany. In 1997, a destructive fire marred the hotel.

The fire was rumored to be ignited by someone falling asleep while smoking on their bed in their hotel room, according to Marshallhotels.com.

"I know who started the fire and I told the police, but the police gave us a hard time. All the employees were interrogated," Smith said. "When I was about to clock out for the night, a work associate showed me this apartment. There was a woman that lived in an apartment there with her kids and the apartment was a mess. She had pizza boxes all over, mattresses on the floor, and what not. I said to him (work associate), 'Oh my god. That could be a real fire hazard.' Sure enough that night, the hotel caught on fire."

Over the years, ideas about what to do with the monumental eyesore have been tossed around, including rumors of turning the Flanagan into college dorms for North Country Community College.

"It must be a mess in there. They'll never tear it down. Yet it is unfixable ... I think they are going to have to tear it down," Smith said. "After the fire, I went

Local photographer shares perspective on Flanagan events



The Franklin Academy Class of 1970 at a reunion in July 1980 at the Flanagan hotel. Rick Auger photo

By **RICHARD ROSENTRER**

One local resident that has been capturing images of

Malone and its history through covering events is Rick Auger, whose photography appears in the Malone Telegram, can

See **PHOTOGRAPHER T16**

Bartending

From T14

into the building with police to try and find a resident's class ring. Ceiling tiles were strung across the floor, the lobby's beautiful stained glass windows were shattered from debris. It was devastating to see that mess and I don't think the hotel will ever be fixed."

The Flanagan has a lengthy 21st-century legal history, with village trustees discussing both condemnation and restoration plans.

Frank Cositore and Bob Hest of Hotel Flanagan Inc., had been working since the early 2000s to rehabilitate the hotel. Cositore — who'd done some work on the building — had

been claiming since at least 2010 that financing was around the corner.

Stone Mountain Prime LLC assumed ownership of the Flanagan and adjacent Lashomb properties on Nov. 6, 2009, by way of foreclosure sale and auction.

Falling debris has in the past closed sections of sidewalk in front of the hotel. Building code issues date back to 1997, village officials said in 2020. The village Board of Trustees that year voted to move forward with litigation to force the sale of the hotel. Hotel Flanagan Inc. had been set to purchase the building and the adjacent Lashomb building from Stone Mountain Prime. Hotel Flanagan Inc. had plans to remove the Lashomb section and revive the hotel with a building garage.

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The Malone Chamber of Commerce Halloween party at the Flanagan was just one of many events covered by Rick Auger at the hotel. Rick Auger photo



Magician Tom Osborne was a staple at the Winter Carnival for many years, and is seen here performing at the Flanagan hotel. Rick Auger photo

Photographer

From T15

be seen with his camera taking photos of many local events and people.

Auger was able to provide a unique glimpse into the history of the Flanagan hotel not only from the perspective of a camera lens, but from simply being at many of the events and social gatherings

at the hotel.

"One of the most lasting local memories people have of the Flanagan hotel is all the special events that took place there – moments that will last forever in the minds of those who experienced them.

Auger spent years taking photos of events at the Flanagan, and remembered the social activity and atmosphere of the former hub of the community.

"Reunions, class reunions, weddings, the Winter Carnival was always in the South of the Border room giving out trophies, and they had bands in

See PHOTOGRAPHER T17



Noticing photo opportunities and a keen eye are vital attributes for a top-notch photographer. Here Auger documented a typo in the Flanagan sign. It was eventually replaced with a sign that properly spelled its name. Rick Auger photo

FA grad produced Flanagan documentary

‘South of the Border – The Flanagan Hotel/Malone, New York’ can be viewed on Youtube

By **RICHARD ROSENTERER**

MALONE – A graduate of Franklin Academy and former Malone resident produced a video documentary about the former Flanagan hotel – and now it has gained greater attention due to the demolition of the local landmark.

The documentary titled “South of the Border – The Flanagan Hotel/Malone, New York” and posted on Youtube, goes back to when the Flanagan was first built, its importance not just to the community, but to the region as well. It also covers the tragic fire that led to its demise.

Sydney Fouse, who graduated from FA in 2020, said she produced the documentary as a final project for an “Introduction to Video Editing” class while she was a sophomore at the State University of New York in Purchase.

The documentary

The “South of the Border” documentary starts off with images of Malone and the Flanagan, giving a description of the village and hotel.



Sydney Fouse. Contributed.

“Once booming, it now sits seemingly stuck in time echoing its golden era that now seems so far away from most of its citizens. In the heart of this village is the Flanagan hotel,” Fouse narrates at the start of the nearly six-minute film.

First, images of the Flanagan in its dilapidated state are shown before images of the hotel in its most grand days are shown.

From there, Fouse moves along in a clear sequence outlining not just the Flanagan’s glory days, but also providing plenty of historical context that allows even those unfamiliar with Malone’s history to gain



The fire at the Flanagan hotel in August 1997 as seen in the documentary.

a greater appreciation and understanding of what the former hotel meant to the local area and region.

Full of details, the video is a testament to the Flanagan’s stature as a local treasure.

The documentary can be viewed at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=60CP12xPMq4.

Be sure to give the video a “thumbs up” and share.

How it started

According to Fouse, for the final project in her video editing class, the instructor wanted each student to produce a

short documentary and do research and story lines. She said her interest in the Flanagan started when her family moved up to the Malone area in 2012.

“I was always kind of interested in the history of the Flanagan, and I thought that

See VIDEO T18

Photographer

From T16

he remembers. “It was always cheerful and everybody knew everybody. That’s the beauty of Malone.”

Auger also mentioned Bob Smith, who used to be the bartender in the South of the Border for years.

“He was just a really down-to-earth person, everybody knew him and liked him,” he said, adding that the social meeting popularity of the Flanagan may never be equaled.

“I don’t see where there’s a particular spot in Malone that people gather for celebrations like they did at the Flanagan,” he said. “I don’t know if there’s

anything in the downtown that matches it. There are a couple of places that have fairly good food.”

Auger also stressed just how memorable a place the Flanagan was – and how many memories it has provided throughout the years.

“When I think about all the good memories of that building, it’s unbelievable. It really is. I have photographs of most of what happened here and I’ve been fortunate enough to document a lot of the events that went on in there,” he said, adding that going through the photos for this special publication also brought back many of his own fond memories.

“It’s amazing the number of people that I’ve had the good experience to interact with over the years in there,” he said.



Dean Lavigne and Jack LaBrake play music at a hotel function. Rick Auger photo

A sad day in Malone history: Fire at the Flanagan

By RICHARD ROSENTERER

The headline of the Malone Telegram on August 22, 1997 told the story: "Fire ruins historic hotel." Little did anyone realize at the time – but it was actually the beginning of the end for the local landmark Flanagan hotel.

According to the report in the local newspaper, the fire was noticed at approximately 11:43 p.m. on August 21, 1997 by a male driving by the hotel who noticed smoke coming from the fifth floor. He then notified the village police department, and firefighters shortly arrived on scene to begin to battle the blaze.

"The fire was coming out from all the win-

dows on the top floor and coming from the roof," Village Police Chief Jim Phillips told the Telegram in the report. "The sky was lit up with flames, that's how intense it was."

Police officer Scott Mulverhill, who was one of the first to arrive on the scene reported seeing a man and woman who appeared ready to jump from the fifth floor to escape the flames.

"They were screaming, and she actually looked like she was going to jump out," he said.

Mulverhill and officer John Durant entered the hotel to conduct a search, and upon opening

See FIRE T20



The Flanagan on fire on Aug. 21, 1997. Image from Youtube video documentary "South of the Border – The Flanagan Hotel/Malone, New York."

Video

From T17

terested in the history of the Flanagan, and I thought that would be the perfect opportunity to deep dive in it," she said. "I was always just so fascinated with the building. It just looked so beautiful. I was never able to find much history, and eventually located a Facebook page titled: 'I'm from Malone, NY and I remember when...'"

Fouse said there were a few guys on that page who posted a lot of content and a lot of pictures, and she was able to piece them together along with old archived pictures online. She added that someone also had posted a video clip from the 1970s showing the village, and that was helpful too.

"I was able to piece together that story, and that was pretty much a collimation of the things I had," she said.

Fouse said the process of producing the documentary was very rewarding. She also said she had received positive feedback regarding her documentary, and in recent weeks, viewership has spiked – with 700 views at the time of this interview.

"A really cool and exciting project," she said, adding the three-month process was well worth it. "It was months of research. It was really cool and inspiring to hear about the heyday of Malone, and that was why I wanted to end (documentary) on a positive, hopeful note as to maybe we can transform it into something else for the community."

Fouse ended the documentary with a message of hope that the Flanagan might return to its glory days, but it was a bit of a letdown once she got word that the hotel's demolition was imminent.

Since that news, Fouse, said she too has viewed her production more often, and admitted she felt a touch of sadness.

"I definitely do get a haunting feeling, it's a bit disappointing that I missed the heyday of when people were in and out of town with the train station next door. There's something about that that seems a bit whimsical I guess. It's quite a bit different than the Malone we have now. It's definitely a bittersweet video to watch now, she said," adding that she did learn some fascinating things.

"It was really interesting learning about just that little corner of Malone right off Main Street when Elm Street meets it and just learning about the former hotel had been on the site of the Miller House. I never heard about that until I was really deep into the history of Malone, and was interested about just how deeply entrenched the Flanagan family had been at one point," she said. "I don't know what happened to their descendants or where they are, but I guess the financial and lifestyle impact the Flanagan really had on the town, I think those were the most compelling for me."

Most importantly, throughout the process, she also gained a greater appreciation for the Flanagan.

"I think it's really sweet how much of a hub it was for people, especially my parents and

people of that generation, she said.

"Since it burned down in 1997, I think there's a big group of people that have so many different ties," Fouse said, adding that she heard many about people's relatives with a connection to hotel, many with employment ties. "I just think kind of amazing of just how involved in the community one place was for such a long time."

And for the record, Fouse received an A on the assignment. She is the daughter of Michael and Erin Fouse, of Malone, and her mother said she is very proud of her daughter's accomplishment and work.

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Items salvaged from Flanagan, and neighboring Lashomb building

By ALEXANDER VIOLO MALONE — After the demolition of the Flanagan - and Lashomb building, which was also torn down - began in April several items were salvaged including stained glass, an alarm bell and glass-pane windows.

Mayor Andrea M. Dumas said she hopes some of the salvaged items can be used by whoever buys the property.

“I am really hoping that when this property is sold and it’s rebuilt, I am strongly going to suggest, I can’t force somebody but I am hoping that they can incorporate something into the property so we wanted to save some of the artifacts,” she said, “To see if they will put some of the glass or the corner window, or alarm

bell up, there was a stained glass window that a lot of people remember inside of the Flanagan, it was a beautiful window.”

Dumas said pieces of the window from the Flanagan’s courtyard were collected adding she hopes a local artist can do something with them.

“It was a beautiful stained glass window and I am really hoping that I can get someone to use the stained glass and do something that we can put back into the property,” she said, “I really want to see somebody put something in there, either the corner window or metal inserts.”

Dumas said the metal inserts are from the Lashomb Building, adding stone was also saved from both buildings. She also

said that she understands some people may view the items as junk but they are from buildings that were in the heart of the village for decades.

“To us the Flanagan was a building that sat there for 29 years vacant but also it was a building of history,” she said.

At a trustees meeting, on June 22, Dumas said the village would be putting out a request for proposals for the lots where the Flanagan and Lashomb buildings once stood, adding the property would be sold as one parcel.

Dumas said it was the first time the village undertook a demolition project of this size.



Days before the Flanagan’s demolition started, workers from Binghamton-based Gorick Construction Co. planned an attempt to salvage several historic features of the building, such as the stone carving at the front of the structure. Richard Rosentreter photo



An engraved stone piece that was above the main entrance of the Flanagan. It is not known if the demolition crews were able to salvage it. Richard Rosentreter photo



A corner window that was salvaged from the Flanagan. Provided photo

Fire

From T18

the door to the fifth floor to see it being consumed by flames. The fire became so intense, that it was no longer safe for firefighters to be in the building, the Telegram report reads. Eventually, Fire Chief Kevin

Cappiello was forced to pull his firefighters from the burning Flanagan. “Ten minutes after arriving on the scene, the fire became so untenable, and the condition of the building so deteriorated, we couldn’t trust the building,” the fire chief said. The next morning, village Mayor Joyce Tavernier was informed that engineers would be entering the damaged

building to assess the structural damage. Not only was the fifth floor demolished, but the tons of water (5,000 gallons) used to extinguish the blaze could compromise the Flanagan’s structural integrity, she later explained. Indeed, that fateful August day of the fire would begin the path to a week in April when the Flanagan had to be demolished.



The Malone Telegram on August 22, 1997.

A final entrance before demo day



The grand windows that were in front of the Flanagan were broken and boarded for decades. Richard Rosentreter photo



The balcony and large window was once a centerpiece when entering the Flanagan. Richard Rosentreter photo



The interior of the Flanagan had become just a hollowed out shell of its former grandeur. Richard Rosentreter photo

By RICHARD ROSENTERETER

It was a warm spring day in April, a time of new beginnings, but the feeling of the coming of the end was in the air. A demolition crew was busy making preparations for turning the Flanagan hotel into a pile of rubble.

As workers with hardhats got the heavy equipment lined up, this reporter inquired about going inside for one last time to take photos of the once grand interior. Fortunately, one of the project foremen granted the request, and allowed what just may be the final photos of the Flanagan's interior.

I was wearing the required hardhat as the foreman warned me to stay within just a short distance from

the main doorway citing the danger of the floor collapsing.

Entering the main door, the scene was sad – nothing but hanging beams, rotted floors above, and the smell of mildew. Despite the depressing sight of a building decayed to the point of no return, I couldn't help but escape the eeriness and let my imagination take over.

Just for a moment, I could see the room full of guests and staff – the hustle and bustle of the comings and goings of people. Just for a moment, smiles and laughs echoed in the vacant cavern of an empty shell of a structure.

Looking at the once grand window in the lobby, I

imagined how many eyes looked up with awe. Looking at the large windows along the building now covered in crusty dirt and wire, I thought of all those who peered out onto Malone's Main Street.

Indeed, I could only imagine. As the demolition foreman looked on and reminded me the building is unsafe, we could not go any further – and it is time to be torn down – I jumped back to reality and continued to snap photos – trying to get each angle and each crevice within range of my lens.

Then it was time to go and as I walked out, I quietly said good-bye to all the memories that were left inside the Flanagan.

Main Street potential highlighted after Flanagan demolition



The heavy equipment used in the demolition looks more like a dinosaur as it takes the first chunks from the Flanagan on the first day of the project. Richard Rosentreter photo

By **RICHARD ROSENTERETER**

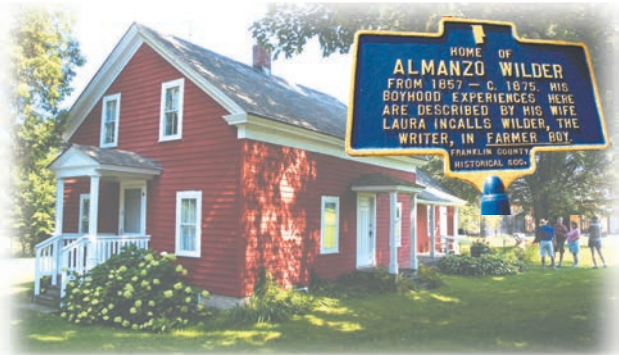
MALONE – Now that the Flanagan hotel has been demolished and a vacant parcel of land sits on the corner of Elm and Main streets, there is plenty of speculation of what

will fill the void. Although there are no definitive plans as of yet, there is hope that an improved Malone Main Street will take shape in the aftermath.

According to Malone Mayor Andrea M. Dumas, the demo-

lition project was part of ongoing efforts including the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) to restore the community's downtown. She said her

See **NEXT T23**



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7:45 PM	Back in Black-AC/DC Tribute Band
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SANTORE'S WORLD FAMOUS FIREWORKS

Historical society staffer expresses sadness over Flanagan's demise

By **RICHARD ROSENTRETER**

The Franklin County Historical Museum and Society in Malone carries plenty of local and regional history – and its staff members enjoy being such a valuable resource. When a building of the Flanagan hotel's stature gets torn down – they too feel the sorrow.

Carol Poole is one of those people and she said one aspect of her job that she enjoys is learning more about the historic buildings in the region, how they were built and even the problems that were encountered.

Poole said that the gradual deterioration of historic buildings is a trend not just in the North Country.

"All across the country this is happening, and when something like the Flanagan goes, that deterioration

increases so rapidly. You heard all the those people who were going to take it over and do all those wonderful things, and that never happened."

"The North Country that I've lived in for eighty years is going very rapidly, and there's very little people can do to stop it," she added. "I'm sure it's been a hard thing for people who have lived in Malone their entire lives to see the Flanagan go – but it was equally difficult to see it deteriorating."

"I feel sadness really, because it was such a part of life for our community for such a long time and has so many memories for so many people, that it's hard to see it go," Poole said, with a crackle in her voice. "It hurts."



By the third day of the demolition, a large portion of the Flanagan had been reduced to rubble. Richard Rosentreter photo



Workers prepare the Flanagan site for the building's demolition. Richard Rosentreter photo

Next

From T22

hope is that the properties can be utilized for some sort of mixed use moving forward.

"The perfect situation would be a mixed-use facility that brings revenue, jobs and more of a tax base to this community," Dumas said, "With the increases in our village budget we need businesses. We are very thankful for the business that are coming here and ev-

erybody that has stayed but we need more businesses here."

One key individual who has been involved in initiatives to improve towns in the northern New York says that Malone has the potential to grow and prosper due to the special character of its Main Street – and he compared it to one very popular area just south of Lake George.

James McKenna, is currently the co-chair of the North Country Regional Economic Development Council (NCREDC), the state's primary economic development body in northern

New York.

According to McKenna, although the Flanagan's demolition is an emotional moment for the community, it can act as a catalyst for growth.

"You look at downtown Malone, to me, it reminds me of Saratoga Springs," he told the Telegram. "I think the momentum that is now happening, with the wide streets, the wide sidewalks and all the commercial fronts, I think Malone is yet to be discovered, but when it is, it's going to be great."



The former site of the Flanagan hotel as seen in late May 2026 after its demolition. Richard Rosentreter photo

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