

HEC 100: MULTIMEDIA ARCHIVES

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

ORIGIN	ACCLAIM	SIGNIFICANCE
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The Origin of Hotel Ezra Cornell

The first Hotel Ezra Cornell took place on May 7th, 1926. Students in the Hotel School wanted to demonstrate the skills they had learned in their hospitality courses to important leaders in the industry, so a few students came up with the idea to create a “hotel for a day.” The idea quickly generated lots of excitement. With support from faculty, they turned Risley Hall into a suitable venue and invited hotelmen to Cornell for the evening. The main events included an eight course dinner and grand ball with a nationally famous orchestra.



Guests of HEC 1 at dinner

Professor Meek from the department of Hotel Management suggested that students create departments to mimic regular hotels, so they created a Board composed of seniors elected into position where each board member managed a department. Other students in the hotel school assisted department heads with their duties so that everyone had a role in HEC.



The board of directors for HEC 1

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Critical Acclaim from Industry Leaders

The work done by students at Hotel Ezra Cornell quickly gained praise from leaders

Two Leaders in Hotel Industry Praise Hotel Training, 'Ezra Cornell' in Sun Interviews

in the hotel industry. In an interview with The Cornell Daily Sun on the opening day of the seventh annual HEC (Volume 52, Number 158), Mr. Frank R. McKowne, president of Hotel Statler, shares his opinion on the Hotel School in light of HEC's growing popularity:

"Cornell has, in my opinion, made wonderful progress with the Hotel Administration courses and is admirably meeting the present need."

Furthermore, he talks about the benefits hotel students have gained at the Hotel School:

"Many of the graduates have worked in our hotels and from our experience with them it is evident that they have immensely benefited by their fundamental educational training and particularly by their technical training."

The manager of The Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee, Mr. Ray Smith Sr., also praises the Hotel School in the context of HEC with the Sun:

"Conditions have so changed since the time I started in the business that I feel that without the aid of the hotel training such as is given at Cornell it would be difficult for a young man to accomplish what I have in given time."

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The Lasting Importance of HEC

Following the tenth annual Hotel Ezra Cornell, an article in The Cornell Daily Sun in 1935 (Volume 55, Number 159) emphasizes the importance of HEC. Although this article was written ninety years ago, the reasons given for HEC's legacy remain true to this day.

HEC shows appreciation to the hotel world:

"If it had not been for the efforts of the industry itself, the school of hotel administration at Cornell could not have gained the significant position which it now occupies. The guests who came from far and wide to attend the affair testify to the importance of the event."

Students gain working experience in a learning environment:

"Every detail of the management of the hotel-for-a-day has been handled by undergraduates, and the experience they have gained in this undertaking should prove invaluable. All of the theoretical lessons learned in the classroom for the past months have been put to test under practical conditions and the benefit derived therefrom is inestimable."

The entire student body, including those unaffiliated with HEC, benefit from the social and formal entertainment produced at HEC:

"Everything is conducted in the manner of a high-class metropolitan hotel, and those privileged to attend the banquet and dance are enabled to enjoy a different sort of entertainment than the usual run of college undertakings."