

# HISTORY OF THE GLEN ROCK HOTEL

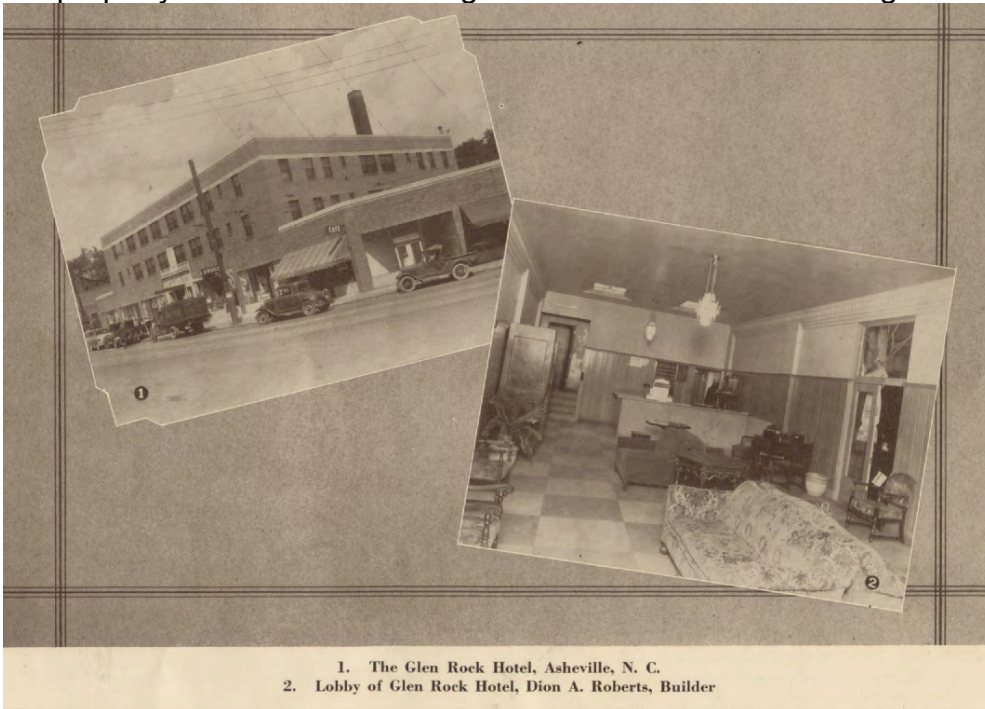
*As researched by Sybil Argintar, Preservation Planning Consultant for the Glen Rock Depot*

The current Glen Rock Hotel, built in 1930, is the second hotel building of the same name built on this site. The first building, constructed around 1890, was a wood-frame, Queen Anne style building with a corner turret that was condemned in 1929 as a fire hazard and ordered to be torn down by the State Fire Insurance Commissioner.



## Original Glen Rock Hotel

The old Glen Rock Hotel was immediately replaced by the current fireproof building which opened for business in 1930. The property at the time was owned by John Hudson Lange Sr., who also owned many other buildings in Asheville, including the Langren Hotel which was formerly located on Broadway in downtown Asheville. The large concrete "L" on the front of the Glen Rock Hotel was in honor of the Lange family name. When John Lange Sr. died, he willed the property to his son John Lange Jr. who continued to manage the hotel business.



1. The Glen Rock Hotel, Asheville, N. C.  
2. Lobby of Glen Rock Hotel, Dion A. Roberts, Builder

## Existing Glen Rock Hotel, photos circa 1930's



**Southern Railway Passenger Depot, across Street from Glen Rock Hotel (no longer standing)**



**Photos of debutantes arriving at the Southern Railway Passenger Depot in 1940's with Glen Rock Hotel in background**

The hotel remained in the Lange family until 1969 when the John H. Lange Jr. Irrevocable Trust sold it to Cannon-Pack Enterprises, Inc. which then turned the building into a food manufacturing and canning business. This business existed until 2006 when Ralph E. Cannon and Cannon-Pack Enterprises, Inc. sold it to Mountain Housing Opportunities, Inc., the current owner.

City directories note that the building was under construction in 1930, but was fully operational by 1931, with the retail businesses located on its first floor including Finley Depot Drug Store, Atlanta Quick Lunch, The Tavern, McFee Jewelry, and Glen Rock Barber. From the mid-1930s through the mid-1940s, businesses in the Glen Rock Hotel included Mills Café, Davis Dry

Goods, Finley Depot Dry Goods, Finley Drug, Atlantic Quick Lunch, The Watch Shop, Glen Rock Barber, the Pullman Company, and Glen Rock Billiard Parlor.

Hotel registers note that many Southern Railroad workers stayed overnight in the hotel on their trips back and forth to Tennessee, since the Glen Rock was conveniently located across the street from the passenger depot. Workers stayed at the Glen Rock from the turn of the century through the 1950s, and were some of the main hotel guests. Hotel registers from 1957 through 1960, the last thriving years of the hotel before it became run down and suffered a negative reputation, note many of the workers at the hotel and what they were paid. There were three porters, a day clerk, a night clerk, three maids, and two seamstresses. The porters were paid two dollars per day, the maids were paid twenty dollars per week, and the clerks were paid \$2.50 per day. John Lange Jr., the owner, was paid five dollars per day.

The hotel business was thriving in Asheville at the beginning of the 1930s, including several others located near the passenger depot on Depot Street, the Gladstone Hotel, the New Commercial Hotel, the Nantahala Hotel, the Roberts, the Walter, and the Booker T. Washington Hotel (later, in the 1950s, the James Keys Hotel), a black-owned and managed enterprise that housed many of the black railroad workers who at the time were required by law to stay in separate accommodations. Within the city there was a total of twenty-three hotels in 1931, most of which were located in downtown Asheville and in nearby neighborhoods.

Inside the Glen Rock Hotel, on the first floor, the lobby has the most architectural detailing, most of which is original in design. Floors are terrazzo, and walls are paneled on the lower two-thirds and plaster above with molding at the upper portion, making use of a modified Art Deco design motif. At the east side of the room are two originally skylights with their original decorative glass. These project up into the lightwell above. A portion of the original balustrade and Art Deco style newel post remains.

The stairs to the second floor have been enclosed in recent times. The second and third floors both are laid out in their original square configurations with a hall on four sides and a central rooftop garden or light well in the center. Walls and ceilings throughout the upper floors are plaster. It appears there were two types of hotel rooms on each of the upper floors. The less expensive rooms, located primarily to the interior, did not have their own bath and guests shared a common hall bathroom. Some of these rooms had sinks. The larger rooms, on the outer perimeter of the building, and facing the exterior for light and views, were larger in size and shared a semi-private bath between the rooms. The stairs to the third floor are also enclosed, but the original balustrade and Art Deco newel posts remain.

The Glen Rock Hotel was designed by prominent Asheville architect Henry Irven Gaines. According to an old newspaper article, the building would include seventy-five rooms, with a construction cost of \$100,000. The general contractor for the building was Dion A. Roberts. The majority of Gaines' commissions in the 1930s were commercial and industrial buildings, but only a handful were located in Asheville. Gaines' most well-known work in Asheville is the F. W. Woolworth Company building, located on Haywood Street in downtown Asheville.