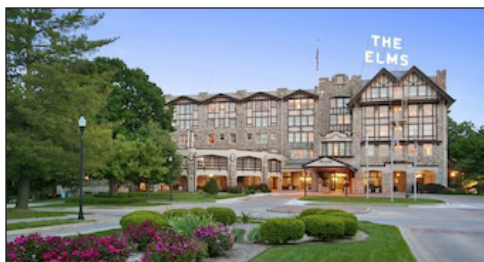


# THE ELMS

EST.  1888

**HOTEL & SPA**



## THE ELMS STORY BEGINS...



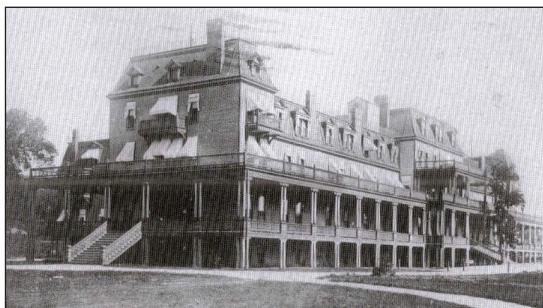
In the late 1800s, a reddish spring of healing mineral waters was discovered flowing down the banks of the Fishing River, which runs to the side and back of the Elms' property. This spring was named Siloam Spring and was the first of many mineral waters found locally. Siloam Spring is the only spring in the U.S. to produce a natural supply of ferro-manganese mineral water. The healing effects of these mineral waters is why Excelsior Springs, Mo. became a health treatment destination for people near and far.

People believed these natural springs had the ability to heal, and the news spread like wildfire worldwide. Locals had healing experiences from the mineral waters, too. Farmer Travis Melion gave mineral water to his

daughter Opal, who had tuberculosis, and her health improved to the point of being cured.

Excelsior Springs was founded by Pastor John Van Buren Flack and landowner Anthony Wyman to accommodate the influx of visitors flocking to the small valley for the healing mineral waters. More than 200 houses were built in the town's infancy while many visitors built camps or stayed in covered wagons.

In 1888, the original Elms Hotel was built out of wood and down the road from where the current structure stands today. This grand new Elms Hotel enchanted visitors with warmth, elegance, exquisite parties, grand balls, lush gardens and mineral baths - this was the place to be and be seen.



The original Elms Hotel, erected in 1888, was exquisite, built out of wood and had porches wrapped around the building.



On May 9, 1898, a horrible fire raged through The Elms' wooden structure, leaving only a pile of ashes. Fortunately, no fatalities or injuries were reported.

Local townspeople saw the commerce and need of having The Elms in town, and their undying spirit is how construction of a second hotel, in the current location, came to be. Progress began on the new wooden structure in 1908 and opened their doors to guests on July 31, 1909. Sadly, a fire ravaged through the building on October 30, 1910 leaving the Elms destroyed once more.

Plans to rebuild The Elms a third

## 1930s

Fame would be less than a decade old when The Great Depression brought misfortune, which would take The Elms into a new era of hardship. The hotel missed a near conversion into a sanitarium, just before filing for bankruptcy in 1931.

By 1932, new ownership brought The Elms out of bankruptcy as the hotel reverted to the health spa playground for which it is renowned.

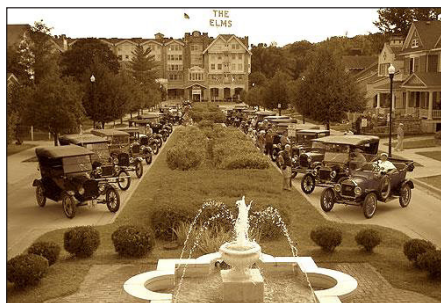
time were complete three months later. Exterior limestone was salvaged from the second building to create The Elms of today.

The Elms opened as a full service hotel on September 7, 1912 and boasted grand ballrooms, decorative verandas and a spa, while attracting a world-famous clientele.

During the roaring 1920s, The Elms Hotel, was a time of economic growth, prosperity and notoriety as an international health resort destination.



Guests during this era included people from all walks of life and a variety of income levels. Everyone from gangsters to governors, sports figures, presidents and more have stayed at The Elms.



The  
1950s

and

1960s



The 1950s ushered a new era of corporate convention, and The Elms pursued this market. The entire hotel would often be reserved for big name conventions including, The American Red Cross, Standard Oil, Avon and more. The Elms also had a reputation as a wedding and honeymooners paradise.

However, the allure was fading and so was business by the end of the 1950s and early 1960s. The hotel was eventually sold and the new owners marketed the hotel as a Motor Inn by Sheraton.





# The 1970s and 1980s

By 1970, The Elms would close its doors for the next eight years. In 1978 - 79, the City of Excelsior Springs, Mo. sought additional investors to purchase, revive and save The Elms Hotel, a historic gem of this community.

New ownership in 1981 brought promise and hope, and The Elms Hotel was alive once again. This crown jewel of the community would attract conventions, tourists, corporate and church retreats, weddings, formal galas and more.

A spa renovation added to the allure. New spa attractions included a European-style lap pool encased within a track for jogging, a waterfall tub and unique cool mist environmental rooms with hot tubs. A corporate challenge course was added for companies to conduct training and team building exercises.

Parts of the hotel were converted into condominiums as a part of a time-share corporation. Advisors came from all over the world to assist in the upgrades. This seemed like a golden era for the grand Elms Hotel.



ELMS HOTEL AND BRIDGE, EXCELSIOR SPRINGS, MO.



# The 1990s

The Elms Redevelopment Corporation and The Elms Hotel itself declared bankruptcy in the summer of 1992. Rumors of closing the hotel stunned city leaders, and the community began to seek ways to save The Elms.

The City of Excelsior Springs made a move in November 1994 to purchase The Elms, and by October 1995, they had bought all remaining interests. The Elms remained open and operated with a profit.

City leaders continued to search for the proper buyers for The Elms Hotel, as the IRS was aggressively seeking to collect unpaid back taxes on the property. For this reason, the

city created a new organization to help transition the hotel to new investors.

By July 1998, The Elms boasted a \$16 million renovation and another grand opening. This time, the hotel offered 153 guestrooms, state-of-the-art conference facilities and a brand new spa.



## THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

The hotel closed its doors for five months in 2011 for a \$20 million renovation, reopening in April of 2012.

In April 2018, The Elms Hotel and Spa was bought by Horizon - Midway Hotel Group and the owners began another multi-million dollar renovation. Updates to all guestrooms, spa, pool, patios, cafe, bars, and restaurant will be ongoing through 2021.

As a proud Hyatt property since 2019, The Elms is your destination home away from home. To gain rewards for your visit, sign up for our World of Hyatt Loyalty Program at [world.hyatt.com](https://world.hyatt.com).



# Guest Diary Entry

Anonymous Journal  
Entry, June 1891 -

*As we traveled the last leg of our journey along the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad, I began to feel the excitement of our summer ahead. Charles and I were taking mother to the renowned city of Excelsior Springs in hopes that the miracle waters there will help mother's rheumatism. I hope it will be a wonderful rest for us, as well. The "dummy" train down the valley is quite a contrast*

*from our smooth Milwaukee Line trip. Here, the cars are small, dirty and poorly ventilated. We are jerked and jolted down the hillsides, winding gradually lower into the town. After a short carriage ride, we see it. The immense, exquisite structure is like a picture from a fairy tale. The three story building stands tall amidst the stately trees. Beautiful gardens are everywhere. Opposite the main entrance of the hotel, an artistic fountain throws its*

*silvery spray constantly into the air. The broad, shady verandas are filled with other guests smoking, visiting and resting. As we enter the main office, we are in awe of the Florida pine woodwork. The main office chamber is of ample dimensions for a dozen sets of quadrilles. At either end is a handsome fireplace, constructed for hearth log fires, and enclosed in imposing mantel - pieces of terracotta of most exquisite design. This is the celebrated Elms Hotel.*

## Employee Testimonial

George Brock, Sr. worked at The Elms Hotel in 1938 as a grounds keeper, and then as a bell hop from 1939 - 1940. He left testimonials about his time as an employee. He said...

*Franklin Roosevelt's son, Franklin Jr., visited in 1939 or so, and there was nothing special about it. Everything was kept quiet. Many prominent people stayed at this hotel.*

*My father worked 12 hour days*

*on the night-shift as a police officer, and he made \$90 a day. There were times when I made \$120 or more a day working as a bell hop at The Elms.*

*The biggest weekend of every year was when the hardware convention come to town. They had a great time, but they destroyed the hotel. They had to fix and redecorate the whole hotel when they left.*

## Paranormal Activity at The Elms

The Elms has a reputation as a haunted hotel, and it has been said to house several spirits. In fact, our hauntings are so famous, we were featured on an episode of SyFy's Ghost Hunters in July 2013. One thing everyone seems to agree on is the friendliness of the spirits. These gracious ghosts may act as spiritual guides to the next adventures that await the grand hotel.

Add a little scare to your stay with our guided ghost tours offered nightly.



# Famous and Infamous Clientele

Al Capone, “Pretty Boy” Floyd and Bugsy Moran all reportedly hosted illegal gambling and bathtub gin parties at The Elms.

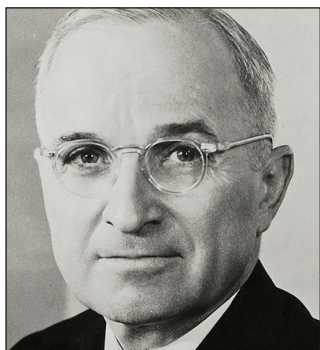
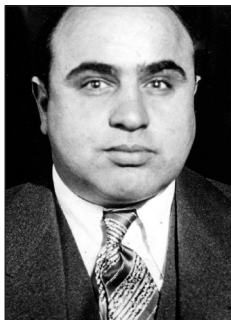
The Capone Suite is on the second floor of the hotel, overlooking Elms Boulevard to the north. From this room, he could see who was coming into The Elms so he could sneak out the back door for a quick getaway.

Today, the door from the original safe where Capone kept his weapons, is up the steps on the right wall as you walk towards The Grotto in the spa.

Prohibition was during

this era, and it was also a time when The Elms was raided regularly by the police. On one occasion, police busted a cocktail party the Governor of Mo. was attending. The Governor told the officers to go bust someone who was “really breaking the law.”

Sports figures including Jack Dempsey and the New York Giants trained and held football camp at The Elms. This 16-acre property, in the 1930s, was a sprawl of lush greens that held festivals, sports teams, thoroughbred trails, fox hunts and an orchestra for indoor or outdoor galas.



Harry S. Truman decided to take advantage of “America’s Haven of Health,” when he checked into The Elms in secrecy on November 2, 1948. A native of Independence, Mo. and presidential candidate, Truman was determined to escape the stress of the Kansas City Democratic Campaign Headquarters on Election Day. He and six secret service agents stayed in room 200, and occupied the entire west wing of the second floor.

Truman’s favorite spa treatments the night of the election included: electric cabinet, a salt rub and mineral water bath as well as a massage. He retired afterwards to his suite and listened to the radio for the election returns. He slept at The Elms the night he was elected President of the United States of America.

After announcing his victory at the Democratic Headquarter, President Truman returned to The Elms amid hundreds of members of the press and well-wishers. The Elms gained a greater level of publicity, thanks to President Truman’s visit.

While the area where they stayed no longer exists, suite 300 is named the Truman Suite in his honor. The Truman boardroom, located at the top of the marble staircase to the right, is where he often read the paper and drank his coffee.

# THE ELMS

EST.  1888

## HOTEL & SPA

401 Regent Street Excelsior Springs, MO 64024 • [elmsshotelandspa.com](http://elmsshotelandspa.com)

The Elms Hotel and Spa has a time capsule of history in each era since 1888. The hotel is a true survivor and a magnificent tribute to the spirit of this community. The Elms Hotel and Spa is still an extraordinary destination getaway, even though the springs are no longer in use. Guests from all over the world continue to visit this historic hotel. Today, The Elms is one of the most popular wedding venues in the state of Missouri. The hotel continues

to draw groups of people who are celebrating all sorts of occasions.

If you have an interest in seeing more nostalgic photos of The Elms, contact The Excelsior Springs Museum at [esmuseum.com](http://esmuseum.com) or 816.630.0101.

