

HOTEL HISTORY

TIMELINE

1876 – PRESENT



600 North Atlantic Avenue
Daytona Beach, FL. 32118

Phone: 386 – 255 – 4471

Fax: 386 – 253 – 7672

www.plazaresortandspa.com

HOTEL HISTORY TIMELINE

1876 Charles A. Ballough came with his parents to this area from Wisconsin.

July 26, 1876 The first town meeting of Daytona took place. The town was named after Mathias Day of Mansfield, Ohio, an investor and newspaper publisher who bought 2,144 acres in 1871, founding the community. In 1872, his property was foreclosed but the name remained. The Rev. Dr. L.D. Houston was elected as the first Mayor at this meeting.

1880 Ballough purchased 152 acres on the peninsula, divided his homestead into lots, and platted it was "East Daytona".

1886 Requiring a railroad adequate to serve a great hotel he built in St. Augustine, Henry M. Flagler bought the first transportation link in a chain of railroad and hotel properties he built down the East Coast to Key West.

1888 Ballough built a beach cottage at the end of Ocean Boulevard (now Seabreeze Boulevard). The cottage was later enlarged and named "*The Clarendon*".

Spring 1885 Ballough forms a partnership with Mr. and Mrs. C.C. Post in the development of the town thereafter named "Seabreeze". The Posts own a casino with a 1,200 foot pier on the south side of The Clarendon in addition to the Breakers Hotel on the north.



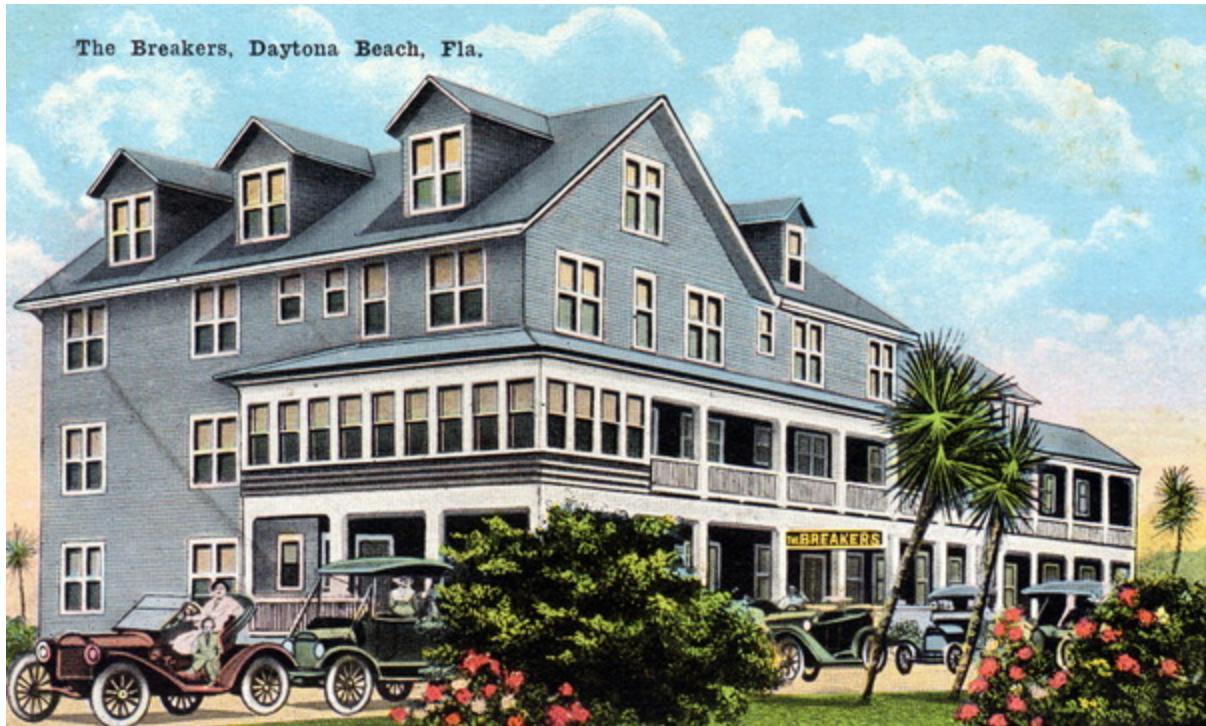
Clarendon Hotel, Breakers Resort, Daytona Beach, Florida, circa 1900.



Clarendon Hotel, Breakers Resort, Daytona Beach, Florida, circa 1900.

1902 Dr. E.L. Potter leased the hotel for five years with the option to purchase it. During the first year, he purchased the hotel along with the casino pier and the Breakers (currently the location of the north parking lot).

1904 The Clarendon and Breakers were joined into one large building and collectively named "*The Clarendon Hotel*". The hotel had its own stable of saddle horses and a livery of carriages. The hotel had spacious porches and a dining room overlooking the ocean.



The Breakers Hotel



Clarendon Hotel, Breakers Resort, Daytona Beach, Florida, circa 1905.



View of the Ocean Boulevard showing the Clarendon Inn, 1908.



Front view of the Clarendon Inn on the beach, circa 1908.



1908 The cost of a stay at the hotel started at \$3.50 per night.



January, 1909 The City of Daytona hired its first paid Fire Chief, Henry T. Titus.



February 4, 1909 The hotel was full of guests at the height of the winter season when a fire destroyed The Clarendon Hotel. Many of the guests were evacuated to the Colonnades Hotel to the south.



Burning of the Clarendon Inn, 1909.



Burning of the Clarendon Inn, 1909.



Clarendon Hotel site after fire.

May 1909 Philadelphia architects Price & McLanaham completed plans for the new “fireproof” Clarendon Hotel.



1910 Quote *“The guest rooms are being furnished in solid mahogany, making it harmonize with the colonial finish of the white woodwork and mahogany doors. All baths are being fitted entirely with enamel; hardware on the doors and windows is nickel with glass doorknobs and the floor is buffed marbeloid”.* There was a preview of the hotel in the Daytona Daily newspaper during its construction.

Jan. 1, 1911 The new 7 story “fireproof” *Clarendon Hotel* opened. It featured a Turkish bath, manicure parlor, barbershop, 18 hole golf course, tennis courts, horseback riding and trap shooting. The Clarendon Hotel and the Hotel Continental on Atlantic Beach in Jacksonville were the only two major East Coast Florida hotels facing a magnificent beach. By comparison, the Ponce de Leon and the Alcazar were situated in the middle of St. Augustine. The Ormond Hotel faced west along the Halifax River, the Rockledge Hotel faced east on the Indian River and the Royal Poinciana, in Palm Beach, faced Lake Worth and the Atlantic Ocean. The Breakers, in Palm Beach, faced the ocean, but its beach could not compare to Daytona’s beach.

Jan. 30, 1911 Pilot John A.D. McCurdy takes off from Key West in his Curtiss airplane in an attempt to fly to Cuba. Cuba had offered an \$8,000 prize to the first pilot to fly from the United States to Cuba. A leak in the oil tank caused the engine to seize and McCurdy was forced to ditch in the ocean. The U.S.S. Terry immediately picked him up and delivered him safely to a dock in Havana, where he was greeted enthusiastically nonetheless. Even though he fell short of his goal, he set two new records: the longest flight ever, and the world’s longest flight over water with a distance of 90 miles.

Feb. 1911 Civic leaders and the hotel signed a contract with airplane manufactory Glenn Curtiss, for \$3, 500 to perform a “Flying Exhibition” on the beach as a tourist attraction. The contract stipulates that one of his pilots, John A.D. McCurdy, would make a series of three flights. Both Curtiss and the Wright Brothers performed such exhibitions around the county using pilots they trained in an effort to sell their product.

Mar. 1911 McCurdy began his flying exhibitions on the beach in front of the Clarendon Hotel. As evidenced by his flight to Cuba, early airplane engines were unreliable, so McCurdy’s plane was shipped by train. The towing of the airplane from the railroad depot to the hotel turned into a tourist attraction. On all of the flights, McCurdy carried a mechanic, who sat behind him and to his left. On one of his flights, he turned away from safety of the beach landing strip and flew west over the Halifax River and south along Beach Street. Business came to a complete halt as clerks and customers alike emptied the shops and ran into the streets.

Jan. 1912 The hotel contracted with W. Starling Burgess, a yacht designer turned airplane builder, to furnish an airplane and pilot to fly the hotel guests during the January to April 1912 winter season. Burgess sent pilot Phillips Ward Page of Brookline, Massachusetts to fly his Burgess – Wright airplane. Phillip Page was a Harvard graduate, a former newspaperman, a good tennis player and dancer. Burgess constructed a hanger on the beach just south of the Clarendon. If one defines an airport as a takeoff and landing field with provisions for aircraft shelter and service, then ours was the first airport in the state of Florida, and among the first fifty established airports in the United States.

Jan. 25, 1912 Before turning his airplane over to Page, W. Starling Burgess flew five test flights in front of the hotel.



Jan. – Feb., 1912 At least five aerial photographs of the Daytona – Ormond area (three of the hotels) were taken from Page’s airplane. They are the earliest Florida photographs known to be in existence that were from the airplane.



Aerial view of the beach and Clarendon Hotel - Seabreeze, Florida, 1912





Airplane flying in front of Clarendon Hotel.



Airplane on beach in front of Clarendon Hotel, 1912.

1913 The hotel hired pilot Ruth Bancroft Law to offer guests rides during the season. Ruth Law was the only woman to be licensed and one of about three still active in 1913. Her brother, F. Rodman Law, was a pioneer stuntman in the movies and the first person to parachute off the Statue of Liberty. They were from a conservative New England family, and Ruth was a graduate of an exclusive finishing school. Her mother, contemplating her unorthodox offspring, once remarked that she felt like a hen that had hatched two ducks.

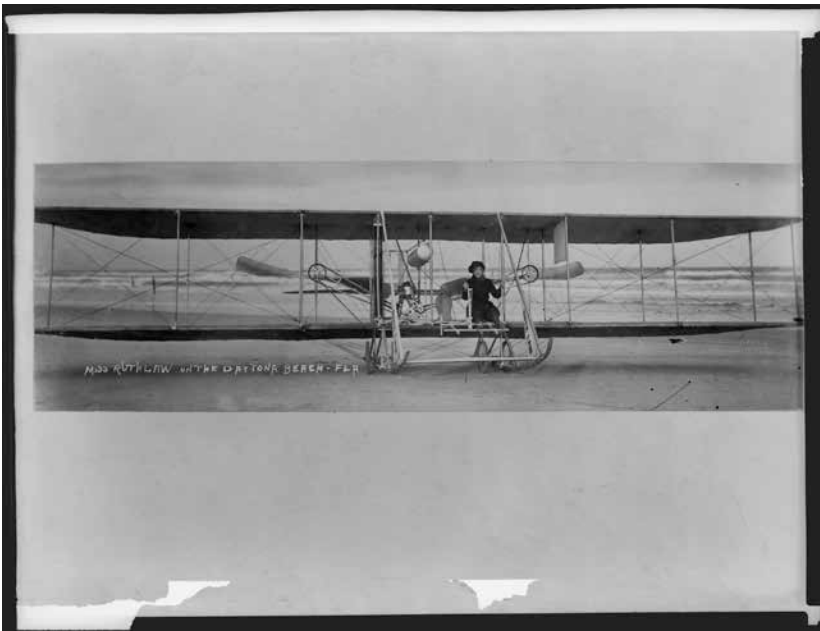
Jan.12, 1913 Ruth Law took off in front of the hotel with passenger Col. C.M. Bingham, becoming the first woman pilot plane in Florida.



Ruth Bancroft Law 1913



Ruth Bancroft Law, Daytona Beach, 1913.



Ruth Bancroft Law, Daytona Beach, 1913.



1914 Ruth Law gave an airplane ride to Ervin Edward Ballough in front of the hotel. Ballough was the nephew of City Founder Charles Ballough. “Ervie”, as he was known locally, would later purchase a surplus Jenny airplane from the Army. During the 1920’s he would become a well-known skilled pilot and barnstormer on the beach.

Dec.17, 1915 In front of the hotel, Ruth Law became the first woman in the world to loop an airplane.



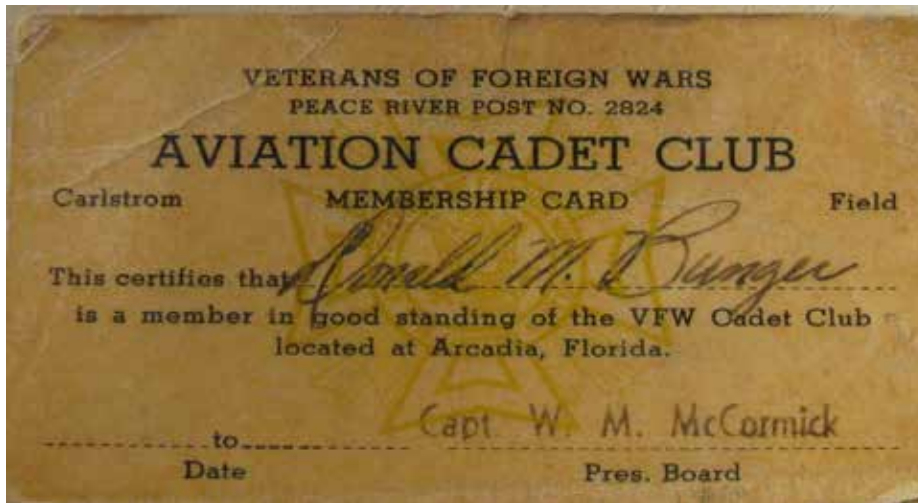
1916 Ruth finished her fourth and last season flying guests for the hotel. During World War I, she tried to enlist as a pilot but was refused. Her husband, Charles Oliver, who had managed her career from the start, established the Ruth Law Flying Circus. She also traveled the country with two male pilots as a highly paid three-plane barnstorming act.

1917 Elmer Kincaid purchased the Clarendon Hotel.

1918 The Army began training pilots for the war at Carlstrom Field, outside of Arcadia, Florida. The beach would continue to be a favorite for pilots, both for training and recreation. They would land here as a part of their cross-country training flights to Jacksonville, as well as to try to recruit young men or to just put on a show. Until 1924, it was common to see pilots and their planes lined up on the beach during stops at the hotel. They would often stay through the weekends.



1919 Quote *“Fliers often tell me that the greatest trouble in landing is to avoid automobiles which appear unexpectedly just as the planes are settling onto the beach and usually stop right in the path of the planes.”* A commanding officer at the Carlstrom Field sent a complaint letter to the Chamber of Commerce.



Automobiles at the entrance to the Clarendon Hotel - Seabreeze, Florida, 1919.

1919 The Volstead Act of 1919 took effect, banning the sale of intoxicating beverages in the United States.

Dec. 23, 1919 Barnstorming pilots, Captain J.O. Jorstad and R.C. "Tex" Marshall, arrived on the beach at the Clarendon Hotel. It was common after the war for barnstormers to keep their Army Corp rank. The hotel served as a navigation point for pilots flying down the coast and the flat sandy beach provided a good runway. It was very popular among the barnstorming pilots. In fact, there were very few airports in Florida, so it made for one of the preferred spots.



Captain J.O. Jorstad's airplane "Blue Bird" on beach in front of Clarendon Hotel

Feb. 1919 A photo was taken of the Blue Bird and Marshall's plane as they sat on the beach front of the hotel. This photo was recreated in a painting, which is currently displayed at The Plaza Resort & Spa Hotel in the Grand Colonnade.

March 1919 Shortly after leaving the Daytona Beach area, Jorstad continued south to Palm Beach. Jorstad's partnership with Tex had dissolved and Tex took over the title of the Blue Bird. While Tex was rerouting north with his plane and passengers, he crashed on takeoff in Rockledge. He and his passengers survived but his plane was destroyed.



1920

Feb. 11, 1920 The Wrigley Flying Circus landed their planes on the beach in front of the Clarendon Hotel. The three planes are the first in the new wave. The airplanes had a flying billboard and the pilots as promoters.



1920



Airplane View, Clarendon Hotel, Seabreeze, 1920.



1920's

1922 Ruth Law, the former pilot for the hotel during 1913 – 1916 seasons, retires permanently from flying out of consideration for her husband. Her husband suffered a nervous breakdown as a result of incessantly worrying about her flying.



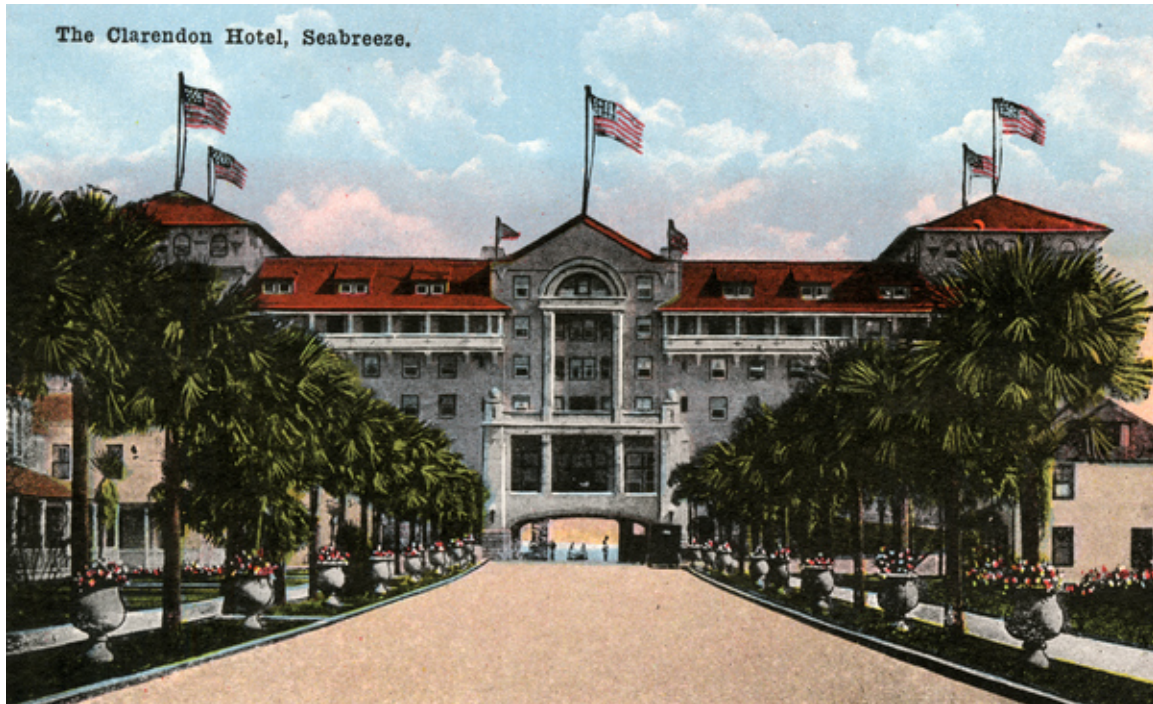
1923



Airplane View, Clarendon Hotel

1925 The Clarendon Hotel became the first resort hotel on the East Coast of Florida not to close down at the end of the season. The owner, Elmer Kincaid, kept the resort open all year long.

Jan. 4, 1926 The three towns; Seabreeze, Daytona, and Daytona Beach voted to incorporate into one city now known as Daytona Beach.



1926

March 20, 1928 A Sikorsky S - 36 , an amphibian airplane leased to Pan American Airways, Inc., landed in the surf in front of the hotel. Pilot C. B. Collyer and mechanic John Johnson lowered the landing gear and taxied through the surf onto the beach. They were returning from an assignment to test the theory of amphibious aircraft in the Caribbean. They enjoyed dinner and spent the night at the hotel.



Postmarked Feb 26, 1928.

1929 Harrington Mills purchased the Clarendon Hotel.

Dec. 1933 Congress repealed the 18th Amendment, also known as the Volstead Act, ending prohibition.

1940 The Clarendon Hotel becomes *The Clarendon Plaza Hotel*

1942 – 1944 During World War II, the hotel closed down and served as a barracks for the Women's Army Corp.



Clarendon Hotel, Daytona Beach, Florida, circa 1943.



Clarendon Hotel, Daytona Beach, Florida, circa 1943.

March 29, 1944 The Sheraton Corporation purchased the hotel from Harrington Mills.

Jan. 20, 1944 The hotel reopened for the summer season under the name *“Sheraton Plaza”*, thus tying it to the Copley Plaza. Boston’s John E. Leonard, manager of the Princess Issena Hotel, which had been purchased by the Sheraton Corporation in February, was named as manager.

June 1944 Quote *“Because of our interest in Daytona Beach and our fondness for its people, we expect do everything possible for their benefit in the future. We are not bringing in outside labor and we are not buying needed materials away from here when possible to do otherwise”*. Elmer Boswell, Vice President of the Sheraton Corporation on announcing the reopening plans for the hotel.

July 1, 1948 J. Wade Linder was named the new manager of the Sheraton Plaza.

Oct. 1, 1949 J. Wade Linder announces his resignation as manager of the hotel. W. S. Piersol, was the formal resident manager of the Princess Issena Hotel, was named the new manager of the Sheraton Plaza.



**1946 Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista
Fishing in front of the Sheraton Plaza**



**J.D. Salinger and his sister, vacationing at the
Sheraton Plaza. 1949**



Daytona Beach 1951

1950 Name changed to *Sheraton Beach Hotel*.

July 20, 1953 The Craig Hotel chain purchased the hotel from the Sheraton for one million dollars and an undisclosed amount of cash. The property then consisted of a seven-story hotel, new twenty-room motel, apartment house, two swimming pools and 750 feet of beachfront. Sheraton would then concentrate on commercial hotel operations rather than resort type hotels.

1955 Hotel named *Daytona Plaza Hotel*

Nov. 1956 Elmer Kincaid, former owner of the hotel, died in London, England. Kincaid was the retired head of Tocolon Co., a cosmetics firm.

1956 The Daytona Beach Convention Bureau was dissolved and its functions were passed on to the Chamber of Commerce.



Daytona Plaza Hotel 1957

April.28, 1957 Guest Martin Collins checked into the hotel. After checking out, he would return to New York, where he was later arrested and identified as Col. Rudolf Abel, a Russian spy. He was convicted and jailed until 1962, when he was traded for downed U2 spy pilot, Francis Gary Powers. After his arrest, Life magazine featured a picture of the hotel under the headline, "Inconspicuous Places for a Spy to Stay."

1957 "He was a quiet man who never had anything to say unless you spoke to him first. About 9:30 every morning, he used to come down in the lobby where he sat to read paperback novels. He always had a camera with him. Occasionally he had me call a cab for him and I expect he went out to take pictures or do some sightseeing. He was a pretty good tipper. Each time I did something for him, like calling a cab or something, he'd hand me a quarter or half a dollar." *Bellhop J.C. Hawkins, on remembering Martin Collins.*



Publicity photo for Daytona Beach 1958

Feb. 22, 1959 The First Annual Daytona 500 was run at the new "Super Speedway."

1959 Daytona Beach can't afford a convention bureau because "the return on investment is too small to support it." A Chamber of Commerce spokesman.

1959 The Craig Hotel chain announced a plan to spend \$30,000 to attract conventions to her sister hotels, The Daytona Plaza and Princess Issena. The defunct Daytona Beach Convention Bureau had an annual budget of \$20,000. The company figured the average convention delegate left a minimum of \$35 a day in a convention town. Their research indicated the convention dollar breakdown as follows: 21 cents for transportation; 18 cents for retail purchases; 25 cents for lodging; 29 cents for meals and entertainment and 7 cents for miscellaneous.

1959 “Everybody’s going to have a convention somewhere, so why shouldn’t they have it here? Convention money is like ‘fresh blood’ in a community. It spreads fast and its somebody else’s resources you’re spending. A week after a convention, barmaids and waitresses, to name only a few, are spending their convention tips for clothes, food, cosmetics and that ‘extra night on the town’ they couldn’t afford before.”

“If anything goes wrong during the convention or some detail is overlooked and the delegates are unhappy, I’m the one who catches the blame. Every now and then some little detail goes wrong, but we’ve never had a convention group leave here unhappy, primarily because of the wholehearted cooperation from every department and employee in the hotel.”

“What most people don’t know is that I’m on call 18 hours a day six days a week. True, the glamour is there, but so is the fatigue. And those plane trips. I work harder on business trips than when I’m here. I’m not complaining. I love the job, but it does knock a hole in my personal life. I don’t have time for a social life away from the hotel. The hotel is my life.” Fran Culbertson, Sales Director, who knew of only two other women doing the same work in Florida.



Dec. 1962 Jacob A. Fine and Milton Pepper purchased the hotel for \$850,000 from the Craig Corporation.

Mar. 1963 The hotel announced a \$500,000 renovation project. Danish designer Majken Westerberg unveiled her plans for the interior decorations.

1963 “It is our intention to restore the hotel to its former position of grandeur. We particularly are stressing the renovation of three spacious areas, which formerly were used for conventions. They are sufficiently large to take care of any convention desiring to come here. We can accommodate more than 1,000 in two large rooms. We plan to refurbish, redecorate, and repaint all of these areas including the public halls and rooms.” Milton Pepper on the plans for the hotel.

1963 The hotel hired a sales manager and convention recruiter, J. E. Campbell.

Jan. 16, 1964 The hotel invited 1,600 to the “Diamond Jubilee” cocktail reception and buffet to celebrate the grand re-opening following the completion of a half million-dollar face lift and improvement. The entire building had been centrally air-conditioned; the lobby, Ocean Room and main dining room refurbished; and a new cocktail lounge, the Camelot Room, had been installed. All guest rooms had been fitted with awning type windows and new lighting fixtures. A bright red carpet had been installed in the old hotel’s huge lobby and the front desk moved to the center of the lobby from its former position on the north end. Improvements included AM/FM radio, television and closed circuit TV in all rooms, a complete electrical rewiring job and installation of three new transformers. The parking lot had been expanded, providing space for 250 automobiles. To do this, the putting green had to be moved closer to the ocean. The hotel’s laundry across the street – which also did the laundry for more than 50 other beachside motels – was redone and had a new boiler system.

Oct. 25, 1964 “Vacation people seem to have forgotten the gentle art of doing nothing. They don’t understand the fine pleasure of a comfortable place in the sun and reading or talking, or just thinking. They must be doing something. They act as though they were going to miss something, or everything was going to end five minutes from now. When I started here, the guests would come in November and stay through April. They’d take an hour for breakfast, two hours for lunch and sometimes content themselves through a formal dinner of good food and gentile conversation for three hours. There was a great beauty in the quiet of the dinner”. Bill Davis, Hotel Doorman since 1930.



Apr. 6, 1965 The hotel announced the grand opening of the new convention hall with a formal dance featuring Guy Lombardo's orchestra. The ultra-modern facility compared favorably with the best in Florida. It can accommodate 1,200 persons at banquets and up to 1,600 at meetings with seats arranged in rows.

Dec. 27, 1965 Donald F. Clark returned as General Manager. He replaced Richard M. Rahm, who left to manage the Hawaiian Inn.

July 3, 1968 Hotel manager Bernice Cohen announced that ground breaking would begin on the 365-room expansion project on the south side of the hotel.

1968 Hotel renamed *Plaza Hotel & Motor Inn*

Dec. 3, 1968 Lawrence Slaughter, former owner of the hotel, died at his home in Saranac Inn, New York.

July 1969 The 356-room expansion was completed, making a total of 525 rooms, including efficiency apartments and suites. The hotel would also feature three nightclubs. Manager Al Hamilton stated that the expansion made it one of the finest older hotels in the state. It had become the largest hotel between Jacksonville and Ft. Lauderdale.

1970 Ruth Law, former pilot for the hotel 1913-1916, died at the age of 79.

Feb 25, 1974 A suit to foreclose a \$500,000 mortgage on the hotel was filed by Gulf Mortgage Realty Investments of Jacksonville, against Jacob Fine and the Plaza Hotel Corp. Fine also owned the Hawaiian Inn in Daytona Beach Shores, and was constructing the Pagoda Hotel (site of the former Coquina Hotel) at the east end of Granada Blvd. The Alaskan at 251 S. Atlantic Ave. in Ormond Beach and the Texan at 701 S. Atlantic Ave.



Dec. 4, 1975 Sale to the public of the furnishings from the hotel began, in anticipation of the demolition of the top portion of the original hotel.

Dec. 1975 The top floors of the original hotel were removed.

Dec 3, 1985 Daytona Properties, Inc. purchased the Clarendon Plaza from Saul and Bernice Cohen for about \$9million. Chuck Penrod, President, pledged to invest \$2 million in renovations. Daytona Properties was a partnership between Penrod and Don Soffer, a Miami-based hotel and resort developer.

Dec. 1985 Quote: “our main interest is to make the Plaza a convention hotel again. These plans depend on how much the city wants these things and how much it wants to work with us. Daytona Beach is a progressive city, and that’s why we are here”. Chuck Penrod, on purchasing the hotel.

April 1986 The hotel announced a \$3 million renovation to begin that summer. The rooms would be getting new carpeting, furniture, wall hangings and drapes. One of the hotel’s clubs, 600 North, would receive a new name and format. It would become part of the chain of Penrod’s clubs, and would discard its rock and roll format in favor of top 40 music. The Plantation Club would retain its name, but would begin hosting live bands. The lobby would be redone in Art Deco style.



1987 The Daytona Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau became its own entity, separate from the Chamber of Commerce.

Mar. 27, 1987 The Beach Boys perform at the hotel.

Fall 1989 SA Limited assumed ownership of the hotel after a \$1 million “pre-arranged cash call” went unpaid. Soffer Hotel Group would manage the property.

Jan. 1990 Plans were announced for a \$3 million renovation. Hotel manager Dan Jones indicated that the renovations would consist of \$51,000 in landscaping and complete refurbishing of the interior and exterior. The hotel would also change its name to, “Howard Johnsons Plaza Hotel”.

Jan. 1990 Quote: “We want to be a hotel with a lounge, not a bar with rooms. A hotel has been on this site since the 1800’s. We want to keep the history alive. We’d like to make it a focal point of Daytona Beach again.” Dan Jones, General Manager.

1995 The hotel became the Holiday Inn Sunspree Daytona Beach.

Jan. 1998 The hotel was purchased by Bray & Gillespie

Mar, 3, 1999 Holiday Inn Sunspree becomes The Plaza Resort & Spa.

Mar. 31, 2000 Former owner Milton Pepper died.

April. 28, 2000 The hotel invited 1,600 to attend the grand opening for the Ocean Waters Spa. Mayer Bud Asher cut the ribbon leading to the \$2 million facility on the lower level. Featuring 16 treatment rooms, the 15,000 sq. ft. facility is the largest European-style spa in Volusia County.





Oct. 3, 2012 North Carolina-based Boykin Management Co. assumes management responsibilities for the Plaza Resort & Spa, a 323-room hotel from Inner Circle Management.