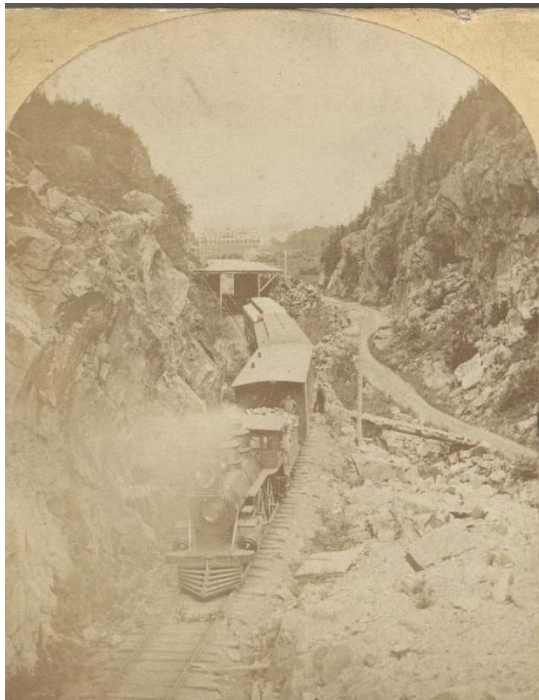


# CRAWFORD HOUSE



The "Gateway," in the 1880s. Crawford House faintly appears in the background. Image from the stereoview collection of Ben English.

The first Crawford House was built in 1828 at the height of the land in Crawford Notch, just past the "Gateway" heading West. After fires in 1854 and 1858 destroyed the original inn and its replacement, the third and final Crawford House was built and opened for the 1859 season.



Guests at the Crawford House, c. 1910  
Photo courtesy of the NH Historical Society.

The completion of the Portland & Ogdensburg Railroad in 1874 was key to the growth of tourism in New Hampshire as thousands of people escaped the sweltering cities to summer in the White Mountains.



Crawford Station, late 1940s.  
Alan Thomas photo from the collection of Dwight Smith.

Major hotels, such as the Crawford House, all enjoyed a boom as a result of the railroad, and most had their own stations with liveries to transport families, along with luggage and servants, for their summer's stay. Each of the Grand Hotels had a capacity of 400 or more guests, each was made of wood, and most eventually succumbed to fire.



A postcard of the final Crawford House c.1905.  
Image courtesy of WhiteMountainHistory.org

Due to changing vacationing patterns, lack of capital to maintain the deteriorating hotel, and increased lodging competition within the area, the Crawford House closed its doors in 1975. Its contents were sold at auction in 1976, and the hotel burned in 1977. The exact cause of the fire was never determined, but the theory at the time was that it had

been started by one of the vagrants who were known to frequent the vacant hotel.

Today, the Appalachian Mountain Club's Highland Center sits on the grounds of the former Crawford House. A four-season lodge and education center, the Highland Center continues the tradition of hospitality for which the region is famous.



Highland Center Lodge at Crawford Notch. Robert Kozlow photo, courtesy of AMC.