Hotel Van Curler  
1924 – 1969

**Location:** Cabinet B, Drawers 1 and 2; Cabinet C, Drawers 1 and 2; Shelf I-3

**Quantity:** ~4 cubic ft.

**Access:** Open for research

**Date Processed:** 1980s/2014

**Arrangement:** The Hotel Van Curler collection is arranged chronologically and by format. Cabinet B, Drawers 1 and 2 contain folders of materials and photo albums arranged chronologically. Cabinet C, Drawer 1, contains memorabilia and oversized materials. Cabinet C, Drawer 2 contains a photo album with pictures from the days of the Hotel’s operation. Shelf I-3 contains blueprints, in digital (on two DVD-Rs) and in their original forms.

**Historical Note:** The building now known as SCCC’s Elston Hall was once the Hotel Van Curler. Founded in the 1920s as part of the “Invest in your Best Schenectady” campaign started by the Chamber of Commerce, the Hotel Van Curler quickly became an important part of the revitalization of Western Schenectady. Located at the intersection of the Mohawk River and the Binnekill, the "Western Gate" of Schenectady had been an important trading post and shipping center for the previous centuries. Native Americans had used the area to trade pelts, and early Dutch settlers took advantage of the rich farmland. The Hotel Van Curler was named after one such Dutch settler, Arendt Van Curler, who was a leader in his community. The Western Gate was thus used as an integral part of local life until the "great fire" of 1819. With the creation of the Hotel Van Curler, the Chamber of Commerce hoped to restore the importance of this once active port.

During its heyday, the hotel served many prestigious guests, including Franklin D. Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan. The hotel fell on financial hard times in the 1960s, and the owners eventually sold the hotel to Schenectady County Community College in 1967.

**Scope and Content Note:** The Hotel Van Curler collection contains a wide variety of different materials relating to the history of the hotel. The collection contains memorabilia from the hotel as well as some maintenance files and some guest records. There are also a number of photos of the hotel during its construction and operation, including pictures of various special events. Blueprints from the addition to the hotel in the 1950s are also available in their original and digitized formats. The collection contains contracts which transferred ownership of the building from the American Hotel Corporation to Schenectady County Community College. Additionally, the collection contains materials relating to the official designation of the former Hotel Van Curler as a New York State and National historic site, and a framed letter from Ronald Reagan congratulating the college on celebrating the 60th anniversary of the building.
Folder/Box/Album List:

Cabinet B

Drawer 1:
Folders/Files:
Folder 1a: Neighborhood Photos Pre-Hotel Van Curler, circa 1924
Folder 1b: Van Curler Hotel News Clippings
Folder 2: Van Curler, Arent, 1620-1667
Folder 3: Van Curler Hotel Menus
Folder 4: Bills and Receipts 1939, 1949, 1952
Folder 5: Misc. Maintenance Files, 1947-1966 Folder 1
Folder 7: Hardware Schedules, 1953
Folder 8: Guest Records, 1955, 1956
Folder 9: Napkin, N.D.
Folder 10: Switchboard Operator’s Manual, N.D.
Folder 11: Hotel Van Curler Photos and Other Materials, N.D.
Folder 12: Seventy-Third Biennial New York State Conference of the Ancient Order of Hibernians at the Hotel Van Curler, 1966

Box 2: Hotel Van Curler Photographs, N.D.

Albums:
Blue: Hotel Van Curler Construction Photos, 1924-1925
Brown: Hotel Van Curler Photographs, Correspondence, etc., 1960s

Drawer 2:
Folders/Files:
Folder 1: Hotel Van Curler/Elston 60th Anniversary, 1985
Folder 2: 60th Anniversary of the Hotel Van Curler
Folder 3: History Booklet Negatives
Folder 4: Hotel Van Curler Plaque, 1985
Folder 5: Copyright Application, 1986
Folder 6: Laws and Regulations for Historic Sites
Folder 7: Samples of [historic site] Applications
Folder 8: Historic Register, 1985
Folder 9: Essays
Folder 10: Historic Preservation for SCCC 1984-1985
Folder 11: Historic Register Misc.
Folder 12: SCCC/Van Curler photos

Bound Report: “Hotel Van Curler Listed on NYS and National Registers of Historic Places, 1985” (5 copies)

Box 3: Postcards – Hotel Van Curler / SCCC
Cabinet C
Drawer 1:
Memorabilia:
0. Van Curler Hotel Waste Basket
1. Van Curler Hotel Envelopes
2. Van Curler Hotel Taproom Checks
3. Bellman’s Cap
4. Van Curler Hotel Spoon
5. Van Curler Hotel Keys
6. Blank Sign-in Ledger (2)
7. Glass Slides, Hotel Van Curler, circa 1925
8. Transparencies from Larry Hart’s Presentation on the Hotel Van Curler, February 6, 1997
9. Framed Letter from President Ronald Reagan on 60th Anniversary of Hotel Van Curler, 1985

Oversized Folders:
O.S. 1: Downtown State Street, WRGB Building, 1924
O.S. 2: Photo of Hotel Staff, 1932
O.S. 3: Linen Napkin, Letter on Van Curler Stationary 1942, Staff Party Photos 1930
O.S. 4: Transcript of Guest Ledger, 1938
O.S. 6: Photographs Hotel Van Curler, including staff Christmas parties, N.D.
O.S. 7: Photo of the Conference of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, June 23-25, 1966

Cabinet C
Drawer 2:
Album: College Photographs Album #1
Section 1: Hotel Van Curler, chronological order 1928-1963
(The other sections of this album contain photos from SCCC’s first years and are listed in the SCCC Photographs finding aid.)

Shelf I-3:
Blueprints:
1. Hotel Van Curler Blueprints Stick Set, 1934
2. United Blueprint Company, Hotel Van Curler Blueprints, 1949
3. SCCC Library Blueprints, N.D.
4. SCCC Auditorium Blueprints, N.D.
5. Hotel Van Curler Blueprints Copies, 2014 (originals on Stick Set, 1934)
6. Hotel Van Curler Digitized Blueprints – Alterations to Hotel Van Curler
7. Hotel Van Curler Digitized Blueprints – Proposed Alterations and Additions to Hotel Van Curler