

# A Brief History of Young's Hotel and The Iron Rail

By Maria Koulouris / Owner / The Iron Rail



I wanted to take some time and highlight the Young's Hotel as we celebrate our third birthday in this legendary space. Let us step back in time to an era where craftsmanship was not only celebrated but required. The Young's Hotel is the building that houses us, the Iron Rail and the upstairs apartments.

One of the great things about the Iron Rail is the history that it carries. And it is so cool that we get to be part of its story. One of the reasons why I wanted to start my entrepreneurial career at 10 Railroad Street was for the rich historic elements.

The Young's Hotel was the house and the barn that Thomas F. Young purchased in 1889 for him and his family. In the afternoon of May 5, 1902, the Great Fire started blazing through downtown New Milford engulfing the stables, the barn (which is the parking lot behind our building), and their house which was also known as the New Milford House. The fire destroyed thirty buildings as well as the New Milford House. That same year as New Milford rebuilt itself, Thomas Young decided to reconstruct the New Milford House but turned it into a three-story hotel and renamed it Young's Hotel. The first floor (street level) would be the restaurant and bar/saloon for the hotel. And the Young family lived on the second floor in the hotel rooms.

The ceiling of the restaurant is the original pressed tin and is still in very good condition. The back bar, the seated bar, and the vestibule is furnished with original hand carved mahogany wood. The back bar is furnished with the original mirror and 3 gold lion heads. The vestibule is adorned with stained Tiffany style windows. The whole bar and vestibule were transported here, on the train across the street, from New York City during the 1920s when prohibition ravaged the city.

After his death in 1935, the Young Family continued to operate the hotel and restaurant until the mid-1940s. Since the 40's the bar in the Young's Hotel has remained and continued to operate. At one point the bar was male only and women could only enter through the left door dine at the restaurant on the other side of the wall.

I find it very entertaining that as a woman I not only am allowed to drink at the bar, but I now am allowed to own it. After a car hit the Young's Hotel and we confirmed that everyone was okay, all I could think about was the damaged building. The crumbled brick that had a front row seat to the train station and to Railroad Street. The front door beams that were split open from the crash now have a hard time welcoming guests into our dining room. All I could think of was this building is too historic, too prized to go down like this.

I truly felt for the building. And while we rebuild, I am excited to see the Young's Hotel restored to its original status and beauty.

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