

July 23rd, 1943

Mr. Glynn O. Rasco, Executive Manager  
Miami Beach Hotel Owners Association  
Miami Beach, Florida

Dear Glynn:

In case Mr. Halley gets too busy and goes north without having interviewed me, I am enclosing two sets of photographs, one dated December 29th, 1942 and the other April 21st, 1943, that I think will help the cause. Don't misunderstand me, I am not anxious to be put on the mat, but do want him to get these.

On June 13th, 1942, I wrote to my brother, Norman Pancoast, at his Forest Hills Hotel. At that time we were handling O.T.S. personnel, operating the hotel ourselves and giving them board and room. We consistently lost money on the board, and the Army was not living up to its promise on the number of guests they were to furnish us. The O.T.S. started first with The Shelbourne, The Roney-Plaza, and The Pancoast, and later on Major Drake took in a lot of other and smaller hotels. The Shelbourne had to give up, and we should have immediately followed suit. The Roney, too, was losing money on their dining room as Major Drake would not allow an increase in meal prices in spite of the fact that Captain Ott had told us that if absolutely necessary this could be done. So we were all casting about for some way to dodge this daily loss, and in my letter referred to above to Norman Pancoast, I said in part as follows: "Another scheme that the Roney wanted to put over was to let the Army have the kitchen. I would hate to let them in our very nice kitchen and very nice equipment." Now you understand this was a letter to my brother who operated the hotel all winter and knew exactly what we had, and I wasn't trying to sell him a bill of goods.

When the Army finally convinced us in November that we better lease to them, or else ----and put their own crew in I was surprised and gratified at the number of their men who came to us and said "This is the finest kitchen we have been in on the Beach" or words to that effect.

I commenced to hear stories about the way the hotels were being abused and how unfair Army condition reports were



with reference to equipment, so on December 29th as a precautionary measure I had photographs taken of our kitchen set up. About the 20th of April, I received a telephone call at noon from Mr. Arthur Howe, who had been managing the hotel at the time the Army took over, and he said in part that Captain Green (background unknown to the writer) had called him and told him that our kitchen equipment was out in the yard and "come and get it," and that Howe had gone to the hotel and was enraged at the way the Army had abused our equipment and wanted me to come and see it. This I did. After taking one look I left without talking to any of the Army personnel as I was fearful that I would not be able to control my temper. Not only was my own equipment at stake, but here was an example of a terrible waste of many precious man hours and scarce metals.

Major Robert K. Dixon, the officer then in charge of the hotel, admitted to Mr. Howe that he didn't even know the change in the kitchen equipment was to be made until it was under way, as Captain Green was in charge of the hospital mess. I located him on the phone and remonstrated with him. He stated that our equipment was nothing but junk anyway. I told him it was not junk until he had ordered it made into junk by throwing it out into the yard. He replied "Oh, well, its no skin off my ass anyhow." Further, that I had better get it at once or he would have it sent away as junk. I told him I would not touch a piece of it or assume any responsibility for it but expected the Army to replace it as it was when I got the hotel back.

The following day, Mr. Howe, Captain Green and Leonard H. Sacks (ex-employee of Maxwell Co., Inc., a local firm who make their living by selling equipment to hotels) from the Post Engineers office met at the hotel, and Mr. Howe was giving them an unabridged edition of his feelings about such actions. Major C. F. Harding, then in charge of Post Engineers, was there and though he took little part in the conversation, he heard it. The next day I contacted Major Harding on the phone and asked him for a date, stated that I guessed we had a small war of our own on and wanted to come down and talk to him about it. He was exceedingly courteous, said that the damage had been done, and that there was no use fighting about it now - that he had overheard the conversation between Mr. Howe, Captain Green and Mr. Sacks. He didn't blame Mr. Howe for anything he had said, in fact, was surprised his remarks weren't rougher.

Since Major Harding felt the way he did, I saw no reason to take up his time with another interview and dropped the matter with a letter to Major Robert K. Dixon in charge of



Glynn O. Rasco Pg. 3

the hotel, a copy of which is enclosed. I am also enclosing a copy of Major Dixon's reply.

I have gone into a great deal of length and detail on this situation feeling that it may be a little different testimony from the many complaints Mr. Halley has received. I don't wish to make it appear out of proportion to the other complaints, but any other criticism that I might make of this whole housing project would parallel and duplicate a great deal that you already have.

Yours very truly,

THE PANCOAST HOTEL CO.

J. Arthur Pancoast  
President

JAP:JH  
ENC.

P.S. By the way, the Army took possession of our property as of November 12th, and at this writing, July 23rd, we have not received one penny of rent. Fortunately, our credit was good enough to permit us to borrow money to keep going on, and have in fact, had to pay out \$1439.93 interest pending receipt of rental payments.

J.A.P.