Cosmopolitan Chronicle.

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini & Cosmopolitan Hotel.

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TIME CAPSULES.

Therese Muranaka.
San Diego Coast District Associate State Archaeologist.

Archaeologists often come across time capsules, which are collections of artifacts found together. If they find one arrow point laying on a trail, it is interesting as leftover evidence. If they find multiple objects grouped together like a time capsule, it is even better, telling a more complete story.

When archaeologists speak to the public, they ask people to leave artifacts in place, they are clues as if working with Sherlock Holmes on a crime scene. These grouped artifacts are called a 'feature' and much more can be learned from them together in situ.

Today, the Cosmopolitan Hotel archaeologists are looking to create a modern feature, a modern time capsule, to put in the ground to mark the interesting time they spent working on the project. At a meeting of the Old Town 'Volunteers In Parks' group a few Saturdays ago, I asked them to write notes to the future, notes that would be buried in Cosmopolitan's capsule. The topic at that meeting was "Talking to the Future; Listening to the Past", and each person spoke to the future. We are now looking for a good container which will seal, and not rust or leak water into the messages.

Looking at some of the more famous time capsules in San Diego Coast District State Parks, we note the First San Diego Courthouse capsule, placed in Old Town in 1992, and recorded with the International Time Capsule Society at Oglethorpe University, Atlanta, Georgia, and with the British Museum. It will be officially opened in 2050. We also note the July 24th, 1851 San Diego Herald which says a time capsule containing documents signed by the original Mexican and U.S. commissioners was buried at the boundary line at Monument Mesa in what is now Border Field State Park. No one today knows what kind of container it was, or if it is still there. Another copper pipe time capsule was placed during the 1894 remodel, which no one has seen again either.

The Casa de Bandini/ Cosmopolitan Hotel restoration/ rehabilitation is an event worth commemorating with a time capsule. If you would like to 'talk to the future', bring a small (4 x 4 inches or less) note of an appropriate nature to the State Historic Park's Robinson-Rose House Visitor Center front desk. Please mark it "Cosmopolitan Hotel Time Capsule". This should be done by April 30, 2009. It will be placed in a non-scientific location so that more digging disturbance will not take place, and it will be recorded with a global positioning system. Perhaps it will go in a plumbing trench or under a new cement walkway. Opportunities to talk to the future are rare, and unlike the First San Diego Courthouse time capsule, this one has no projected time to be opened.

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VOL. III, No. 2 San Diego, Alta California, March 20, 2009 Price: Free

CHALLENGES, PART 1.

William F. Mennell.
San Diego Coast District Services Manager.

In a previous issue, challenges from the past were suggested. One of them was "turn 50,000 adobe bricks by hand." In order to do that, well, "there's a lot to this."

First you need a lot of "good" adobe soil. Soil in a most basic breakdown is comprised of 3 main components: sand, which is 2 to .05 millimeters, silt, .05 to .002 millimeters, and clay, less than .002 millimeters. "Good" adobe soil is considered to have a content of about 20% to 30% clay. This is not to say all adobe structures have been made with this percentage, some have been found to contain as little as 3% clay. Experts today are a little baffled on how that was possible, but lab tests confirm it is.

The adobe soil used in the Casa de Bandini contains a high percentage of "fines" both clay, and silt. 50,000 bricks would require the soil of about half a football field excavated about a foot deep. Originally, it is highly unlikely the site of the Casa de Bandini, or the plaza would have been completely flat as they are today. There would have been a slight slope upward toward Presidio hill. When rivers flood, they deposit silt, and the San Diego River has a well documented history of flooding. So, it is most likely "the spoils" i.e., soil removed, from the building site and to flatten the plaza were used to make the brick, in addition to slightly lowering the plaza elevation. The plaza then would also become a perfect place to sun dry bricks, as in 1827 there were no trees on the plaza.

After finding enough soil, you need shovels. Although shovels are one of the more common tools, in 1827 they were very valuable, and you would have 3 main choices. Wooden blade, have a blacksmith make you metal blades, or import them from England, Spain, or the East coast. Until the late 18th century, only wooden shovels were manufactured in the U.S., but they were individually made by smiths, an expensive and time consuming process. Captain John Ames founded the Ames Shovel Company in Massachusetts, in 1774. His company, now Ames True Temper, is the oldest continuous company in the U.S. He used a water-powered trip hammer to form the blades, which were then fitted with local hardwood handles. The company went national in 1803.

Trip Hammer

It could be argued that the shovel is the most important tool in U.S. history. All gardeners and farmers must have one. They were used to lay the tracks and build tunnels for the railroads, and the early locomotives couldn't move unless someone was shoveling wood or coal into the boilers. They were used in mining, and stoking steam powered engines and boilers, which drove sawmills, and heated factories. Shovels are used by the military to build fortifications. They are needed to build roads, lay pipes, fill sandbags for levies, free stuck vehicles, and move snow. Captain John Ames couldn't have chosen a more important tool to make.

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VOL. III, No. 3 San Diego, Alta California, March 27, 2009 Price: Free

CHALLENGES, PART 2.

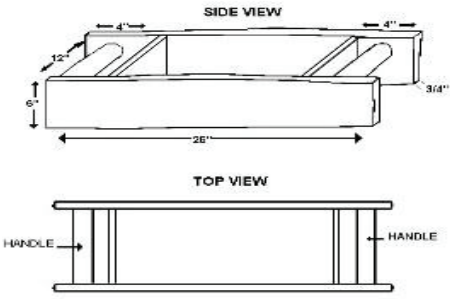
William F. Mennell.
San Diego Coast District Services Manager.

Construction on the Casa de Bandini most likely began the late spring, when the ground is moist. Anyone who has tried to dig in dry soil in San Diego knows it can be as hard as a rock, which is why it makes good bricks. Taking advantage of the rain or retreated flooding would make it actually possible to dig. If the soil got too dry, water would need to be added. This may have been done by digging channels from the San Diego River to the plaza. Additional water would be needed in making mortar and mixing the bricks in any event.

Using shovels, the workers would dig a shallow pit often referred to as a "borrow pit" to mix the mud. One such pit was found during an archaeological dig in 1995 at the Estudillo, just off Calhoun Street.

Now, they will need two more tools, hoes, and machetes. The hoe is a very ancient tool, first being made of wood alone, then antler, bone and stone were added as blades. The development of copper, then bronze then iron and steel, greatly improved the tool, so they not only worked better, but lasted longer. Hoes in 1827 would be acquired the same places as the shovels, made by a blacksmith locally, or imported. The hoes are needed to mix the mud so it is consistent, and to blend in the chopped grass or straw. Chopping the grass or straw is where the machetes come into use. The machete, although used in even primitive cultures throughout the Americas, is a much newer tool than a hoe, as they require a metal, usually steel blade. Machetes were first spread over the world by the sea trade; the major centers of production were in Collinsville, Connecticut, USA and in England, and Germany, although Spain is noted as well for metal work and fine blades.

After the mud is mixed it is shoved into wooden forms or molds. Although there are many types of adobe construction, the Spanish introduced wooden forms to the Americas. The forms used in 1827 usually made one or two bricks. (*See Cosmopolitan Chronicles Vol. I # 18 and #19 for more on lumber and joinery*). Usually the bricks are twice as long as they are wide, and there is no "standard" size. The forms used for the Casa de Bandini may have been left from



the construction of the Mission, and/ or the Presidio.

Once the mud is packed into the forms, it has to dry a short while, depending on the weather, before the forms can be removed. After the forms are removed, the rows of bricks are dried in the sun. For even drying, the blocks have to be turned over every few days. Turning 50,000 bricks–weighing between 45 and 65 pounds–would take days.

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VOL. III, No. 4 San Diego, Alta California, April 3, 2009 Price: Free

A COSMOPOLITAN HONEYMOON.

Ellen Sweet.
Historian.

In 1875 one *Californio señorita* was headstrong enough to defy her father's wishes and marry her sweetheart. Father Antonio Ubach performed the marriage while the groom's uncle Julio Osuna and his wife, Josefa Crosthwaite, served as witnesses. The bride's parents did not attend.

The newlyweds were 24 year old Juan María Matías Marrón, and Lorenza Serrano, age 20. Considering that some *Californio* ladies like Arcadia Bandini married as early as age 14, they were not that young. He was the son of Silvestre Marrón and the deceased Leonora Osuna. She was the daughter of José Antonio Serrano, known as Don Tonito, and María de las Nieves Aguilar. The Serranos, Aguilars, Marróns, and Osunas were well-known in Old Town San Diego.

An 1875 diary of Judge Benjamin Hayes, whose deceased second wife was the bride's older sister, tells more of the story. It even includes a letter in Spanish written by Judge Hayes at the request of Don Tonito and his daughter Lorenza to the intended groom. The letter states that it was the wish of her father to not let her marry at the present time *(en el presente tiempo)*. The next day the young man called on Judge Hayes, who lived next door to the Serranos, and asked for a personal interview with Lorenza. Don Tonito had already refused him. Acting as intermediary, Judge Hayes called on Miss Lorenza. The diary records that she said, "The letter was sufficient; that she did not wish to marry without the consent of her parents."

That evening there was a *baile* or dance at the Casa de Serrano. The next day, July 17, Judge Hayes writes, "This morning every thing more favorable to the wedding of Lorenza. Don Tonito finds it useless to resist the will of the young lady, and consents, or rather yields. The priest has been advised. She told me last night, that she wished to be married at 4 pm." Then Judge Hayes relates that her wedding dress was brought to her by Julio Osuna at 2 pm. Hayes' young daughter is quoted as saying, "Oh, it is very pretty!" And the wedding was performed about 6 pm at the church.

The diary goes on to say that after the wedding they took rooms at the Seeley House (Cosmopolitan Hotel) in Old Town. Sadly, Hayes writes that "none of the family were present."

Two days later the wedding party, consisting of the bride and groom, the groom's sister Felipa and her fiancé Chauncey Hayes (Judge Hayes'son), and José María Estudillo and his wife María de la Luz Marrón, left the Cosmopolitan Hotel for the groom's home on Rancho Agua Hedionda.

Did Don Tonito forgive his daughter? She was his youngest daughter and the last to marry. His daughters Rosa and Adelaida had died as young women. *Californios* had strong family ties. Undoubtedly the issues were resolved. Juan and Lorenza were married until his death in 1924. Lorenza became the mother of nine. She died in 1950.

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VOL. III, No. 5 San Diego, Alta California, April 10, 2009 Price: Free

THE HOLE, PART 1.

Victor A. Walsh.
San Diego Coast District Historian.

Not too long ago Robert Robinson, the district civil engineer, asked me to walk over to the Cosmopolitan Hotel to look at a hole in the adobe end wall facing Juan Street. We walked up the stairway to the second story and down the balcony to the end room. A cacophony of sounds—crowbars prying off lath, hammers banging nails, drills boring holes—filled the air. It was pure symphony to my ears.

Robert and one of the workmen pulled up a piece of plywood across the floor of the small room. Below us was the massive adobe end wall of the first floor. Nearly four feet wide, it spanned two joist bays.

"Can you fix it?" Robert asked, pointing at a huge hole in the adobe block apparently knocked out years ago when the room was a utility room. Kneeling down over the hole, I could see it was about three feet deep, measuring about 1½ feet across at the bottom and extending out around 4 feet across the top course. The width of the hole was about 16 inches.

I stood up, and we walked out onto the balcony. "Well, can you fix it? We're on a tight schedule," Robert asked. "Yes, yes, I'll do it!" I yelled ecstatically. I am sure everyone on the second floor heard me.

Two days later, I was in the hole, wringing wet with sweat and water from the buckets of mud. The first task was to square the existing block by hand with a chisel and hammer so that the new mud-mortared block would fit snugly. Power tools are never used on adobe because the vibrations from them will loosen the brick.

The size of the original brick, when Juan Bandini and his family lived here in the 1830s and '40s, was about 20-24 inches in length and 16-18 inches in width. Nini Minovi, the archaeological project leader, and several Soltek workers had salvaged some of the brick, but it was too soft to be reused as brick. That's the beauty of adobe: It can always be recycled—in this case as mortar.

I rubbed my hand across a roughly textured, red-brown brick. One-hundred and sixty years ago someone tamped mud into a wooden mold. It had pieces of chopped up straw in it to help wick away moisture. I left it intact, unused—my connection to the building's past, to an almost lost craft, to the man or woman who made that brick long ago.

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VOL. III, No. 6 San Diego, Alta California, April 17, 2009 Price: Free

THE HOLE, PART 2.

VICTOR A. WALSH.
San Diego Coast District Historian.

Early the next morning I was back at the Cosmopolitan Hotel to finish patching the hole in the end wall. I needed six adobe bricks of comparable size to the historic brick: one for the bottom course, two for the next course, and three for the top course.

Sean Shiraishi, a park interpreter, who has been making adobe bricks across the street from the Cosmo, literally saved the day. He graciously gave me six, sun-dried bricks, and loaned me a shovel and wheelbarrow to mix mud.

Each brick weighed about forty pounds. I hoisted one at a time on my shoulder and lugged each of them up the stairs. Next, I broke up some old damaged bricks in the Seeley yard, strained to remove pebbles and small rocks, added some sand and water, and mixed it into a mud-like paste for my mortar.

My next task was to cut each brick to its proper dimensions, working from the lowest course up. Bricks are scored or cut to size with a handsaw about a ½ inch deep; then the saw mark is gently tapped with a chisel and rock hammer to cut the block.

This was not difficult except for the bottom course. Since I had already mortared it with mud to set the new block, I had to kneel down on the joist, lean over the hole, and extend my arms while holding the brick and set it in place. I finally did it after the third try. That night my back ached even after a long soak in the bathtub.

The filled hole was about a half-foot lower than the existing wall. I used the remainder of the Bandini block to fill the hole and then plastered it over with mud. The only thing that remained to be done was to fill and patch the surface block on the exterior, which could be done later from a scaffold.

People often ask me what is my obsession with adobe? Why do I do it? After all, I am the district historian, not a mason. One of my principal responsibilities is to review proposed treatments of and alterations to historic buildings. Bill Mennell, an expert craftsmen and my supervisor, once told me that historians—if they want to be truly effective—need to understand historic building materials, methods of construction, and use of tools. He is a strong advocate of hands-on-learning.

Over the course of several years, I have begun to understand the importance of proper site drainage and grading, the causes of horizontal and vertical cracking, and the latest technologies and methods to stabilize or seismically reinforce earthen structures.

But what truly amazes me about 19th-century building materials like adobe, brick and lime plaster are their ecological and chemical properties. Unlike modern building materials, they are porous and permeable, derived from the land, and can always be recycled or reused. What we make from them are our tangible connections to an older, more natural world.

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VOL. III, No. 7 San Diego, Alta California, April 24, 2009 Price: Free

THE QUILL.

Cynthia Hernandez.
Archaeological Project Leader/Interpreter.

Juan Bandini had an extensive exchange of correspondence with his son in law Abel Stearns. Bandini's handwriting was nice and clean and we think that at least some of the letters written before 1830 were written using a quill.

The quill was used for over a thousand years, starting as early as the seventh century. Even after the introduction of the metal nib, quills were still used because of their writing excellence and flexibility.

Geese or swan feathers were the best to make quills. After the feathers were plucked from the wing, they were sorted (not all feathers worked), cleaned, and trimmed. Then the shaft was carved to a very fine point and a slit was made for the ink to flow to the tip. The cuts were done with a small sharp knife which we know today as the "penknife". Left hand pens have nibs that are cut at a left-slanting angle. Right hand nibs are straight.

No two quills are identical because of the structure of the feathers and the skill of the quill carver.

Writing with a quill takes practice. One has to apply very light pressure and a slanted hand to avoid ink stains, the constant dipping of the tip of the quill in ink made writing a very messy job, resulting in stained fingers and sometimes ink spills.

Poets and writers were commonly called "ink stained fingers" because they would be so focused on their words, they became clumsy with their quills.

The last step was to blot up the excess ink on the paper. A substance called pounce was shaken onto the paper. It was made out of salt, sand, cuttlefish bone, or pumice stone ground very finely (almost like talcum powder). From Roman times, through the medieval period up to the early 19th century pounce was used and later on blotting paper was introduced. Pounce was kept in a container similar to a salt shaker, and the proper thing to do after using pounce was to return the excess pounce to the pot. These pounce pots could be made out of metal, glass or ceramic.

Ink was usually contained in two kinds of bottles: ink wells and ink bottles. Ink wells were more decorative containers that were purchased empty and were intended to be refilled with ink. Ink bottles were sold commercially and generally (not always) discarded after they were empty, but they could be refilled and used as ink wells.

Metal pen nibs came into common use in the 1830s, and by the 1850s the quality of these nibs was quite good and quill usage was fading.

Because of the delicate nature of feathers, quills are almost impossible to find at archaeological sites; metal nibs and ink bottles are some of the artifacts that ASM archaeologists have found at the Casa de Bandini. What if they find a penknife? This will let us know that maybe a feather was used to write Bandini's history.

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VOL. III, No. 8 San Diego, Alta California, May 1, 2009 Price: Free

THE COSMO BALCONY.

Victor A. Walsh.
San Diego Coast District Historian.

The Cosmopolitan Hotel opened in September 1869 amid much fanfare. For proprietor Albert L. Seeley and many other Old Town inhabitants, the two-story building with its wood-columned balconies and baluster railings on all four sides symbolized Old Town's economic revitalization.

The hotel offered a variety of services, including a bar, sitting and billiard rooms, a barbershop, and a post office equipped with telegraph. But the one feature that caught everyone's eye was the imposing second-story balcony overlooking the plaza. Guests reportedly could see as far as the bay on a clear day.

The balcony quite literally was the community's grandstand where guests often gathered to watch an array of activities taking place on the plaza, anything from bullfights or mule team races to holiday celebrations like the Fourth of July or circus performances.

The Fourth of July was an especially gala affair, marked by cannon fire, marching bands, speeches, and toasts. The Declaration of Independence was read in both English and Spanish.

Occasionally, guests saw more sordid things such as an Indian "vagrant" being whipped.

The correspondent for the *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin* left an intriguing account of one such bullfight that he witnessed in December of 1869–a spectacle of torment more akin to bull-baiting than bull fighting in his opinion.

> Last week Old San Diego was in all its ancient and pristine glory—the Plaza fenced in and scores of poor bulls driven round by the *Hijos del País* (Sons of the Country) on horseback, care having been taken first to saw off the animals' horns. Any one would naturally suppose that the American element was powerful enough to put an end to such barbarous pastimes as bull-baiting in a public square. The saloon, store and hotel-keepers seemed to enjoy the whole thing hugely. American ladies as well as gentlemen being among the lookers-on, from the balcony of the Franklin and Cosmopolitan.
>
> When a poor terror-stricken bull could not be made to face any kind of an enemy, not even by fire crackers, the *muchachos* (boys) would fasten a tin can to his tail and then his gyrations caused immense applause. One would frequently break through the barrier and escape outside in a vain endeavor to fly from his tormenters; but he was speedily captured by the *hijos* on horseback, and dragged to the scene of his suffering again.

The pageantry of events seen from the hotel balcony indicates that Old Town was a frontier society in transition, shaped as much by its Mexican traditions as by its aspiration to become an American town.

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VOL. III, No. 9 San Diego, Alta California, May 8, 2009 Price: Free

THE COSMO SITTING ROOM.

Victor A. Walsh.
San Diego Coast District Historian.

Along with the bar, the other premier public space in the Cosmopolitan Hotel was its "spacious sitting room." Located in the large first-floor corner room facing the plaza, it provided hotel guests, including family members and visitors, with a place to dine and socialize.

Like the bar, it had decorative redwood beaded wainscoting and window wells painted with an oak-grain faux finish. It also had a tongue-and-groove Douglas fir floor, ideal for dancing, and a redbrick fireplace with a curved arch trim and Greek Revival wooden mantelpiece. The tall multi-paned windows allowed ample light into the room on sunny afternoons. A chandelier most likely hung from the ceiling.

The sitting room most likely had a separate dining area. A photograph, circa 1890, shows an interior cross wall with beaded wainscoting and a single, wood-trim doorway on the far side of the room.

By the early 1870s, as Albert Seeley and his wife Emily's social standing rose, the room had become the town's community center. It was the scene of raffles, family reunions, dances, Christmas parties, evening balls and weddings.

One such event, a dinner dance honoring the "ladies of San Diego" occurred on a Tuesday night in September 1872. The *San Diego Daily World* described the "scene of revelry" in loving, impressionistic detail.

> The hall was decorated with tasteful festoons. The American flag depended (sic) in very direction, and flowers and symbols of nationality consecrated the event.…
>
> About nine o'clock the delightful affair was under way. The beauties of San Diego were on hand *en masse,* and the dance fairly under way….(But) the ladies were all holding back. None of them were willing to go forward. Bonaparte solved the difficulty in a trice. He called out for the youngest ladies to enter and they all started at once.

The reporter at this point describes the ladies' attire in great detail, omitting various letters from their last names to create an aura of mystery and romance.

> Mrs. S-l-y was another brunette who selected a black costume. Of this toilet, quite a favorite amongst the ladies last night, it may be remarked that Bulwer says that only *distingue* people look well in it. We rejoice in quite a number of *distingue* looking people in San Diego, for a wonderfully large number of ladies looked charming Tuesday night in this tint; amongst whom was Mrs. Estudillo, who varied the plain black with a white stripe, Mrs. C-thw-te, and Mrs. S. M-rr-n.
>
> Mrs. J. M-rr-n, another brunette, and an exquisite dancer, was dressed in a handsome barege; while Mrs. H-n-t-n, a pleasing brunette, attracted admirers by a very charming white toilet.

The sitting room was the hotel's largest room, and along with the bar and billiard rooms, the most elegant in terms of appearance. Private rooms upstairs where guests and boarders stayed were considerably smaller and more utilitarian. Boarders, for instance, stayed in cramped, shoebox-size rooms, 10 x 11 feet.

The availability and use of public space, we can conclude, was the Cosmopolitan Hotel's defining hallmark.

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VOL. III, No. 10 San Diego, Alta California, May 19, 2009 Price: Free

A LANDMARK SAVED: COUTS RESTORATION 1930-1945, PART 1.

Victor A. Walsh.
San Diego Coast District Historian.

On July 21, 1928, Bandini's grandson, Cave J. Couts, Jr., bought the property from Marion and Vernetta Newman of San Mateo County for $10 in gold coin—a striking indication of just how far the old house and premises had deteriorated. Two years later, Couts, Jr. remodeled the building, which he leased to various individuals for use as a hotel and restaurant called the Miramar Hotel.

Couts took considerable liberties, remodeling the historic building in the Steamboat Revival architectural style then popular in the South. The entire building was stuccoed. The redesigned roof no longer had the wide, horizontally extended overhang that graced the Cosmopolitan Hotel. The wooden shingles of the old hotel were replaced with asphalt shingles. The first-floor porch was plastered and lined with a balustrade railing of "cast stone" (concrete). Decorative white lath curved screens embellished the tops of the porch and balcony on all sides. The stucco walls were painted yellow; the window sashes white, and the porch trim green and brown. Junipers, century plants, and other shrubs lined the beds along Mason and Calhoun Streets. For the first time, the building was equipped with plumbing and gas lines; the latter to accommodate the installation of modern kitchen appliances, such as a three-burner gas plate range.

Couts' promotion of the building focused on his Hispanic heritage. The grandson of Juan Bandini, he restored the home as a memorial to his mother, Ysidora Bandini de Couts. The development of the auto-tourist industry and the public's captivation with the state's Spanish origins convinced him to market the "Casa de Bandini" as an upscale tourist destination that celebrated a Spanish heritage rich in pageantry and refinement as exemplified by his grandfather. John D. Spreckels, the sugar baron, had restored the Casa de Estudillo adobe across the street in 1910 and converted it into a successful tourist attraction as "Ramona's Marriage Place" because of its association with Helen Hunt Jackson's popular 1884 novel Ramona.

The auto-tourist industry suffered though, with the onset of the Great Depression and later World War II. Couts' operation never prospered during these years. Few tourists visited his hotel. Rent money often went directly back into maintenance. Rooms were sometimes crowded with local transients, and finding responsible or reliable lessees was an ongoing problem. Mrs. J. W. Fisher, who managed the leasing contracts and took a personal interest in the building, complained in one of her letters to Couts that "…poor old men from the county (are) sleeping two, three & four in a room, two in the cantina between the dining room & scullery and all the other rooms similarly filled. Of course that makes it ('the *casa*') not an apartment house, club or rooming house or hotel. It is just a rest home."

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VOL. III, No. 11 San Diego, Alta California, May 26, 2009 Price: Free

A LANDMARK SAVED: COUTS RESTORATION 1930-1945, PART 2.

Victor A. Walsh.
San Diego Coast District Historian.

In March of 1935, Cave Couts Jr. leased the old hotel to Margaret Adams Faulconer. The lease was for three years, beginning March 1, 1935 and ending on February 28, 1938. The terms of the lease stated that the building was "…to be used only for the purpose of an apartment house, dining room and the assembling place for historical, literary and similar societies."

Her business operated under the name, *Casa de Bandini*, and the timing seemed opportune since the California Pacific International Exposition had opened in the summer of 1935 at San Diego's Balboa Park. Both Faulconer and Couts hoped to attract tourists from this world fair, and the building quickly became linked with the cultural traditions of a mythical Spanish past. Faulconer ran full-page advertisements in the *San Diego Union* featuring images of gaily-dressed dancers and guitar-strumming *caballeros* posing in the courtyard garden.

"In all California there is no more romantic building than the Casa de Bandini, located in Old Town San Diego. Here, where once the dashing Dons and lovely senoritas recreated the social grace of aristocratic Castille, in this one-time province of Spain, has endured for nearly a century and a quarter the tradition of a great family.

"Out of the pages of the past unto the stage of the present comes a restored and brilliant Casa de Bandini. In this transition from yesterday to today, nothing of its former charm or beauty has been lost.

"Much of California's history has centered in this truly magnificent specimen of real California architecture…. It was the home of Don Juan Bandini, noted caballero. Today it is still owned by the Bandini family, in the person of Cave Couts, grandson of Don Juan.

"On May 25, a few days previous to the opening of the California Pacific International (Exposition), the Casa de Bandini once again will assume its traditional place as the center of California's social gaiety."

During this time, the Casa de Bandini hosted a full repertoire of theatrical, historical and literary events. There were evening historical lectures and slide shows. San Diego State Teachers College offered off-campus workshops in the historic casa on "early California plays." Theatrical performances at the hotel often focused on the rich pageantry of events associated with the region's early history. *Heart's Desire*, a play about the Bandini family in 1846 during the U.S.-Mexican War, used the rear patio and balcony, glowing with footlights, as the stage for its evening performances. A review of the play characterized "Don Juan Bandini" as "a man of culture and refinement." "Bandini, his wife Dolores, and his three beautiful daughters, Ysidora, Arcadia and Josefa, were the center of social activities in San Diego," noted the reviewer. "Each night scores of their friends and acquaintances gathered to dance and enjoy the beauty of the Bandini home and garden." Plays like *Heart's Desire* and the promotional literature of the day helped popularize a legendary Bandini celebrated and remembered for his Old World gentility and rank—the "Prince of Hosts" in the words of historian and *San Diego Union* columnist Winifred Davidson.

Cosmopolitan Chronicle.

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini & Cosmopolitan Hotel.

VOL. III, No. 12 San Diego, Alta California, May 29, 2009 Price: Free

A LANDMARK SAVED: COUTS RESTORATION 1930-1945, PART 3.

Victor A. Walsh.
San Diego Coast District Historian.

Cave Couts Jr.'s remodel of the historic building played upon the refrain of an imagined past. The building was not a "…magnificent specimen of real California architecture…," but the Cosmopolitan Hotel remodeled in a Steamboat Revival architectural style. The historic adobe walls and other features of the casa were concealed beneath cement stucco façades. Balconies and porches that never existed in Bandini's time were decorated with white vertical lath. "These inaccurate and commercially motivated remodels, always conducted under the claim of authentic restoration representing California's romantic Spanish past," concludes Ione Stiegler and her team in their Historic Structure Report, "would characterize the Casa de Bandini from the 1930s to the present day (2004)." Although not an authentic restoration, Couts made an invaluable contribution to the future of historic preservation and today's restoration of the Cosmopolitan Hotel. By 1930, when he renovated the hotel, the depression had made it prohibitively costly for contractors to replace existing building materials with shipped goods.

To economize, his contractor (Day) salvaged and reused a wide variety of materials from the Seeley hotel, including porch roof decking, beams, purlins, and even balcony posts. His workers boarded-up many of the original doorframes, windows, and other open spaces on the second story with roof decking from the veranda of the old hotel before they applied the stucco. These sections stand out from the redwood clapboard siding, providing a perfect blueprint of the locations and dimensions of the doors and windows of the original Cosmopolitan Hotel. In addition, the stucco protect the clapboard and square-top iron cut nails from the elements. State Parks staff also removed sections of the stucco from the first floor of the Calhoun Street wing. To everyone's surprise, the adobe block, which dates back to the Bandini era, is in very good condition, except the first-floor kitchen area, where moisture and rat infestation have taken a dreadful toll since the 1970s. Nobody expected the majority of the adobe brick walls to be in such good condition because nonporous materials like stucco trap moisture, which causes adobe to melt and eventually crumble. A thick lime plaster had been applied to the chicken wire covering the adobe block. It helped insulate the adobe from the stucco, allowing it to breathe and wick away moisture. Couts' workmen had used it not to protect or preserve the adobe, but rather to apply the stucco finish to the wall.

What can we conclude? Couts' work crews salvaged and reused many building materials from the Cosmopolitan Hotel and even earlier. This may have stemmed from the 'hard times' of the Great Depression, or a tradition of frugality common in many building trades back then unlike today, or perhaps the difficulty of obtaining readily available materials from local outlets. In certain areas of construction, such as the brass pipe in the bathrooms and tongue and groove Doug fir flooring on the second floor, Couts did not scrimp on money. Nonetheless, there was a concerted effort to reuse existing material, which has preserved entire sections of on-site historic fabric and architectural features—the single most important source of information to a fuller understanding of a building's construction history. In doing this, Bandini's grandson help save a family historic landmark.

Cosmopolitan Chronicle.

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VOL. III, No. 13 San Diego, Alta California, June 5, 2009 Price: Free

A LANDMARK SAVED: BANDINI-COUTS FAMILY 1924-1930.

Ellen Sweet.

Historian.

In 1924 a young woman, Margaret Gaffey, corresponded with her cousin Cave J. Couts, Jr. She wrote him, "All this excitement over old adobes . . . has brought back to my mind a dream I've always had is to get Bandini House--do you suppose there is the slightest chance that I could—Mama says it's an olive oil factory or something." Couts had been working on his Rancho Guajome, reconstructing the family chapel. He had over 5000 adobe bricks made and planned a September dedication in honor of his mother Ysidora Bandini's' birthday. Margaret asked her "Uncle Cave" to check on the availability of the property in Old Town.

By August 31 Couts wrote Margaret about her request. "I have learned that property in Old Town is very cheap and that the old place is practically abandoned . . . and will see what can be done . . . and I do truly hope that you will get it and restore it as I know you would love to, but I can assure you that it will be one gigantic undertaking."

Margaret hoped that some of her mother's inheritance from Arcadia Bandini's estate could be used for the purchase. Arcadia, daughter of Juan Bandini and widow of two extremely wealthy men, died without a will in 1912. Litigation over the estate had gone on for years. Margaret's mother, named Arcadia Bandini for her aunt, was the daughter of Juan Bautista Bandini. By the following January, Margaret's father, John Gaffey, wrote Cave Couts, "I . . . am sorry to say that I cannot afford to buy it. . . I did not answer your first letter because I wanted to consider everything, as Margaret is so anxious to have the old place."

Apparently the lack of financial backing by the Gaffey family did not stop Couts. On February 17, 1925, he wrote Margaret that "I have bought the old Bandini house at Old Town, pending only on the signature of one heir holding a very small interest. I made the bargain on the 3rd of Feb'y and must be completed within thirty days from that date. I bought the entire block, made a good bargain, only $1000 down balance of $11,500 to be paid in four annual payments with interest at 6%. . . . Your enthusiasm awakened mine and I am mighty glad that we have it." Margaret responded in a telegram, "You are a Darling."

In March, Couts wrote that, "The owners have all agreed to sell, but the question of giving title seems to be quite serious . . . I will undertake the responsibility of clearing title." The question of title to the property seems to have gone on for years, even into 1930, and involved at least one court case. A deed was written July 21, 1928 to Cave J. Couts for lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 of block 451 in Old San Diego. Ownership of the block had been a confusing division of property among a number of owners, many of whom were from the San Francisco area when Albert L. Seeley sold the property in 1888. With the enthusiasm of a young cousin, Cave J. Couts, Jr. was able to acquire his grandfather's property and take on another reconstruction project honoring his family.

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VOL. III, No. 14 San Diego, Alta California, June 12, 2009 Price: Free

A LANDMARK SAVED: COUTS PRESERVATION WORK.

Ellen Sweet.
Historian.

Despite legal problems to clear title to the Casa de Bandini and the rest of block 451, Cave J. Couts, Jr. continued to work on restoring his family home. Like the Guajome chapel, Couts' work on Casa de Bandini was to be a memorial to his mother, Ysidora Bandini. An article in the *San Diego Union*, June 29, 1930, titled "Bandini House Work Nears Completion," stated that Couts was then starting to work on the adjoining garage which would accommodate thirty "machines." Furthermore, "the old well on Juan street, famous in days gone by, is being rebricked and will be used for irrigation purposes." Couts claimed that the well "once furnished water to all San Diego . . . and if the present water troubles end disastrously, I think I can help out with an almost limitless supply of good fresh drinking water from that well!"

When the work on the Casa de Bandini was ending, Couts began work in 1931, along with other pioneers and friends, on El Campo Santo in Old Town. The old graveyard had been sorely neglected and efforts were made to try to identify as many graves as possible. Couts served as honorary chair of the group that included George Marston, Winifred Davidson, Tommy Getz, Milton P. Sessions, Mrs. Claus Spreckels, Mayor John F. Forward, Jr., Cliff May, and others.

In May 1932 Couts worked with the State Park Commission and signed the registration for the Casa de Bandini as a California Historical Point of Interest. He was also instrumental in acquisition of land for the new Palomar State Park that same year, again working with George Marston.

Other related preservation efforts of Cave J. Couts included restoration work on Pala Mission, establishing El Camino Real, beautification of the Old Town Plaza, repairing the County Courthouse, preserving the San Luis Rey bell, and promoting tourism in the north county area. Most of these projects dated from 1939-1940 at a time when Couts was in his 80s.

Perhaps the last project that interested Couts was a plan to create an international center in Old Town with the Casa de Bandini as the keystone. It was to be restored and other buildings to be constructed to fill out the rest of the city block. "El Pueblito Centro Internacional" was featured in the San Diego Union, January 21, 1940. Nothing seems to have come of this project. In July and August 1942 there was talk of army occupation of his land in Old Town. Finally, Cave J. Couts, Jr., who was known as the "Last of the Dons" and who had been instrumental in preserving much of Old Town, passed away in July 1943.

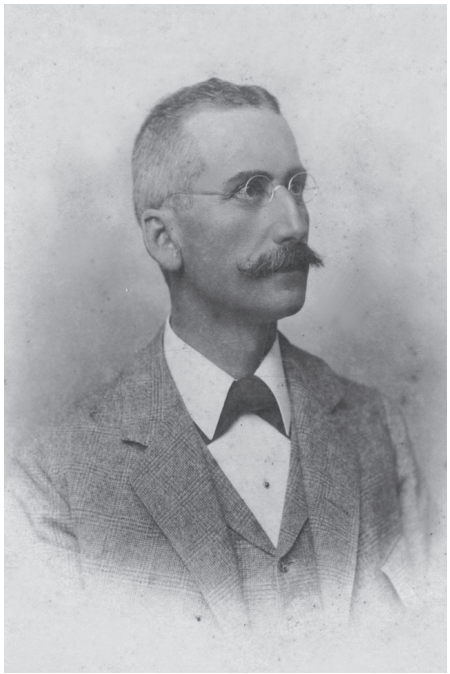

Photo of Cave J. Couts, courtesty of the Historian's Office, San Diego County Department of Parks and Recreation

Cosmopolitan Chronicle.

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VOL. III, No. 15 San Diego, Alta California, June 19, 2009 Price: Free

WANTED: A GOOD HOTEL IN 1868-1869.

Ellen Sweet.

Historian.

In April 1865, a San Diego correspondent writing to the *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin* complained, "We have three hotels, with not more than business enough for one—and five stores whose prices are high, with few buyers." Merchant E. W. Morse, writing to his fiancé in September 1866, echoed these sentiments, "Business is very dull in town. I think I never saw it duller than it has been for the last week."

Much of that changed when the enterprising Alonzo Horton visited San Diego. This ambitious businessman had already started a town in Wisconsin, made money in the gold fields of California by trading ice to the miners, and ran a successful furniture store in San Francisco. Selling his San Francisco business, he moved to San Diego in 1867 for his next venture. Acquiring a large tract of land near San Diego Bay at auction for pennies, Horton set about surveying and subdividing his property.

Horton's enthusiasm and his promotional trips to San Francisco and San Jose brought speculators to San Diego. In April 1868, a business associate of E.W. Morse wrote , "I understand that you have no hotel now open at San Diego, and that some of the persons who went down to prospect the County, returned on the same steamer disgusted because they could get no stopping place. San Diego ought to have a good hotel, if she expects to attract strangers."

Unfortunately, the Franklin House of Old Town was vacant at that time and other accommodations were minimal. By June, the Franklin was leased by mail contractor Albert L. Seeley, who renovated and refurnished it. Six months later plans were announced by the new proprietors to greatly enlarge and improve the Franklin.

Meanwhile, houses were quickly going up in Horton's New San Diego. Restaurants, bakeries, livery stables, saloons, and small stores made their appearance. Even Old Town tried to keep pace. In October 1868 a new dry goods store, another saloon, and a harness maker's establishment opened near the plaza. The city trustees attempted to beautify the public square, although some people complained about the crumbling adobes and the public use of the plaza for races and bull fights.

Steamers kept bringing a large influx of people and goods to San Diego. The town overflowed. In 1869 the newspaper noted port arrivals at the rate of about 1000 monthly. Others arrived by stage or other conveyance. Hotel accommodations were still much needed. Beds were even put up outdoors. Horton offered to give an entire block of land to anyone who would erect a first-class hotel on the property.

About a year after Seeley leased the Franklin, he planned a new hotel for Old Town by adding to Juan Bandini's old adobe *casa*. By July 1869, Spring Valley resident and newspaper correspondent R.K. Porter wrote, "Mr. Seeley's new hotel begins to present a fine appearance, and will be a great improvement in the appearance of the Plaza." By October, Porter praised the hotels of Old Town as the preference for families. He felt that Horton would have to build his own grand hotel for New Town.

As the year 1869 came to a close, the Old Town Plaza was again fenced and the traditional bull fights were held. Some of the best viewing was done from the balconies of the Franklin and Cosmopolitan Hotels. At the same time, Alonzo Horton announced plans for his own commodious brick hotel in New Town.

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VOL. III, No. 16 San Diego, Alta California, June 25, 2009 Price: Free

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Historian.

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VOL. III, No. 17 San Diego, Alta California, July 3, 2009 Price: Free

THE COSMOPOLITAN HOTEL AND THE OLD TOWN-NEW TOWN RIVALRY.

ELLEN SWEET.
Historian.

Opening his Cosmopolitan Hotel in Old Town in the fall of 1869, Albert L. Seeley had many potential customers. People poured into San Diego to check out Alonzo Horton's land promotions in New Town, yet Horton's own hotel would not open for another year. News of placer diggings in Baja California also drew people to San Diego. And talk of a railroad between San Diego and Los Angeles was the hope of many people.

In late January 1870 a rancher found gold near the headwaters of the San Diego River. The excitement of the Julian gold discoveries caused a large exodus of people from all over San Diego. Of course those miners often returned to town on business and some stayed at the Cosmopolitan. A guest register for the hotel has been preserved at the California State Library. Its pages start with April 1870 and show many entries from Julian City—people like George M. Dannals and the McGinley family.

As time passed, many of the businesses began to leave Old Town for New Town. Spring Valley resident Rufus K. Porter wrote that "the old place was beginning to look desolate. Nothing will be left there in a short time but a few saloons and lawyers, with the officials, who of course cannot leave." When court was held in Old Town, business picked up. But Porter and others advocated having the county seat--court and jail--removed from Old San Diego. The Whaley house's downstairs was leased for court sessions and the upstairs for the storage of records. With only a small iron cage used as a jail, the jail situation was so unsatisfactory that prisoners were sometimes sent to Los Angeles for safe keeping. There were no real county public buildings. Meanwhile, Alonzo Horton continued developing his land by the bay, had offered space for public buildings, and would open his large, first-class Horton House hotel in October 1870.

Agitation for change came to a head when the Board of Supervisors ordered the removal of county records to Horton's Addition. Both District Court Judge Murray Morrison and County Judge Thomas Bush became embroiled in the situation. The supervisors were removed from office by the county judge and replaced by others more sympathetic to Old Town. The residents and merchants of Old Town felt loss of the county seat would mean their ruin.

Controversy continued into 1871 when the Supreme Court ruled that Judge Bush had no power to remove and replace the old supervisors. In March, George Pendleton, the county clerk and recorder who was most active in trying to keep the county seat in Old Town, became ill and died. The District Court judge also passed away.

The Supervisors quickly appointed a new county clerk, Chalmers Scott, who removed all court records from the Whaley house late one evening. By April 1, 1871, the county records were available to the public in Horton's Addition. This ended the court controversy, changed the county seat, and put another nail in Old Town's coffin.

One wonders if Albert Seeley, who supposedly told Alonzo Horton in 1869 that "your mushroom town of New San Diego soon will peter out," was sorry that he had not accepted Horton's land offer to build his hotel in New San Diego. But by early 1871, the ambitious stage man Seeley was running daily stages and mail service between San Diego and Los Angeles and had expanded his stage line into Arizona.

Cosmopolitan Chronicle.

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini & Cosmopolitan Hotel.

VOL. III, No. 18 San Diego, Alta California, July 10, 2009 Price: Free

THE DEMISE OF A LANDMARK.

Ellen Sweet.

Historian.

In 1854, Juan Bandini returned to Old Town, having been expelled from Baja California for inciting political unrest. He again took up residence in his beloved 'mansion' on the plaza, but much had changed during his three-year departure.

Without a steady source of money and deeply in debt, Bandini opened a "*tienda barata*" (cheap goods store) in the front *sala*. The effort failed and by September he had leased part of the house to Joseph Reiner who opened a hardware and dry goods store. Subsequent leaseholders included Jacob Elias, who ran a general merchandise and grocery store, and Heyman Mannasse, who opened a clothing, hat and boot shop. The front porch was remodeled with a wood shingle shed roof and boardwalk floor to promote retail operations.

None of these ventures or attempts by Bandini to sell his home proved successful. On August 19, 1859, he transferred ownership of the *casa* and other properties to his son-in-law Abel Stearns to whom he owed $32,000. He died less than three months later on November 1, 1859.

Over the next decade, the old home, reflecting the family and the town's decline, fell into disrepair. On October 2, 1858, a windstorm destroyed the kitchen roof and damaged the tile roof of the main house. By 1860, it was unoccupied.

As executor of the estate, Stearns requested Ephraim Morse, a New Town merchant and friend, to oversee the property's maintenance. In December 1861, efforts began with the repair of the clay tile roof, but in January a fierce rainstorm struck, snapping the house's rafters, hurling roof tiles, and toppling corral and garden walls. "It was not only a flood of waters falling from the heavens, but such a South-easter I have never known," wrote an alarmed A.S. Ensworth, a boarder at the nearby Whaley House. "The whole of the wall around Bandini's large garden below the pear garden is one mass of mud, the water being about two feet deep around it."

On May 27, 1862, an earthquake cracked the adobe walls in several rooms, including a large vertical crack in the dining room. The quake also collapsed the entire end wall parallel to Juan Street. The damage was not repaired.

Over the next several years, adobe walls melted away, and part of the building was converted into a stable and feed storage complex. While vacant, locals sometimes helped themselves to tiles and timbers.

Clearly frustrated by his inability to maintain or lease "the old house in San Diego," Stearns wrote Cave Couts, another Bandini son-in-law, in 1864, explaining that "it would be well to nail up the doors and encharge some one there to look after it."

That would not happen for another five years until Albert Seeley, a stage driver from Texas, bought the ruin, and with his wife's inheritance repaired and converted it into a fashionable hotel and stage stop.

Cosmopolitan Chronicle.

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini & Cosmopolitan Hotel.

VOL. III, No. 19 | San Diego, Alta California, July 17, 2009 | Price: Free

ELECTRICITY.

William F. Mennell.
San Diego Coast District Services Manager.

When Cave Couts Jr. remodeled his grandfather's casa in 1930, he added plumbing to the building for the first time, but electricity was already there. A picture taken between 1900 and 1910 when the Cosmopolitan was being used as a school, shows electric wires strung on the ceiling, powering electric light bulbs.

This was about 25 years after electricity was first available in San Diego. In 1886, only 4 years after the very first commercial power plant was built in Manhattan, the Horton House (at the current location of the U.S. Grant Hotel) was the first building in San Diego to have electric lighting, 15 years after it was built. It received its power from the Jenney Electric Light Company, the first in town. San Diego Gas, Fuel, and Electric Light Company formed in 1887, buying out the Jenney Electric Lighting Company, of Indianapolis, the San Diego Gas Company, and of the San Diego & Coronado Gas & Electric Light Company, becoming the second company in town to provide electricity. In 1895 it became the San Diego Consolidated Gas and Electric Company. In 1910 however, it still had less than 6,000 electric customers.

Where did these companies get electricity to sell? Almost everyone in the U.S. has heard that Benjamin Franklin did experiments with kites and lightning. He is credited with developing the notion of positive and negative charges, and his experiments illustrated that lighting is an electrical discharge.

But we do not harvest our electricity from lightning. To do that it took the work of many more people. As early as 1650, the German physicist Otto von Guericke experimented with generating electricity. In 1729 Englishman Stephen Gray discovered electrical conductivity, Hans Oersted discovered electromagnetism in 1820, Michael Faraday in 1831 formulates the principles of electric motors and transformers, bringing us to 1879, and Thomas Edison's invention of the light bulb. But to make the bulb work, Edison needed to also invent 6 other things: the parallel circuit, an improved dynamo, the underground conductor network, the devices for maintaining constant voltage, safety fuses and insulating materials, and light sockets with on-off switches.

In San Diego, the power company built an electric power plant on Second and J Streets to power arc street lights, some of which were 125 feet tall. A second was built in 1888 to supply power to an Electric Rapid Transit (which failed,) and the city's first incandescent lighting service.

Cosmopolitan Chronicle.

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini & Cosmopolitan Hotel.

VOL. III, No. 20 San Diego, Alta California, July 17, 2009 Price: Free

ELECTRICITY PART 2.

William F. Mennell.
San Diego Coast District Services Manager.

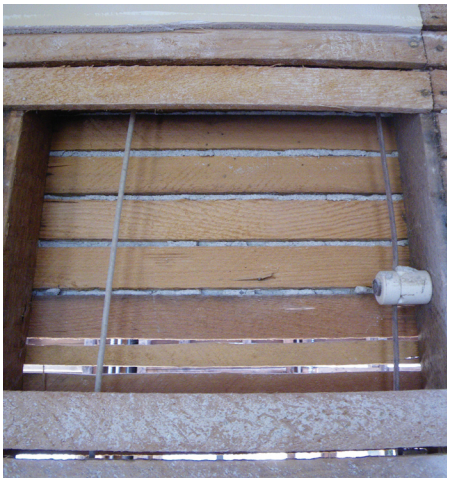
The electric wires seen in a Cosmopolitan photograph taken between 1900 and 1910 were installed using a system called knob and tube. This type of wiring was commonly used from the 1880s through the 1930s. The knobs and tubes are made of porcelain, and the 2 wires, insulated with asphalt saturated cotton cloth, or cotton and gum-rubber–an Edison design–are attached to the knobs usually spaced about a foot apart. The tubes are used to go though wooden members such as joists, or studs. A hole was bored and the tube inserted the wire then strung through the tube. When needed, wire was spliced by twisting them together, soldering, and wrapping the splice with friction tape, made from asphalt saturated cloth, in the open, or in metal boxes. In the early photograph, it appears that tubes were not used; the wires going from room to room were simply strung through the doorway, attached to knobs on the door jam. It is unknown if the power in the early 1900s was DC or AC current. The company first offered AC in 1902, but continued DC for several years after that.

When Couts Jr. had the building rewired in 1930, he changed two important things. One was to hide the wiring in the walls and ceiling, and two, he added outlets.

Outlets would not have been needed much in the early 1900s for two primary reasons. One, electricity costs for lighting were often sold at a cheaper rate than other uses, and because there was very little one could plug into them. Most electrical devices of the time were designed to be attached directly to screws on the light fixtures. That allowed for use at the cheaper rate. Direct attachment to screw connections was seen by Harvey Hubbell—who had invented the on-off pull chain socket in 1896—as both a waste of time, and potentially dangerous, because connecting the wires to the wrong screw could cause a short circuit. In 1904 he patented the "separable plug."

The plugs and outlets were two prong, although the 3 prong outlet was invented in 1928, by Philip F. Labre, their use did not become popular until the 1962 revision of the National Electric Code.

Although we do not have a sample, Couts Jr.'s electrician may have also used Hubbell's new light switches that replace the push button type with the type we know today. Hubbell invented them in order to get UL approval, a valuable endorsement for sale in his companies catalog. The company he founded is still in business today.



Couts Jr.'s Cosmopolitan Wiring

Cosmopolitan Chronicle.

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini & Cosmopolitan Hotel.

VOL. III, No. 21 San Diego, Alta California, July 24, 2009 Price: Free

ELECTRICITY PART 3.

William F. Mennell.
San Diego Coast District Services Manager.

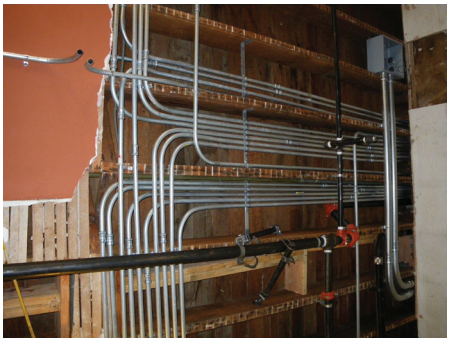
Electrical wiring today is far more complicated than in either 1910, or 1930. There are far more things needing electricity that were simply not available at the time. No one checking into the hotel in the 1930s would have been using a hand held hair dryer for example, because it wasn't readily available until 1951. There was no room air conditioner–1947, no television–1939 at the earliest, no microwave–1967, and drip coffee maker–1972. Many of the things we now take for granted in a stay at a hotel.

The National Electric Code has changed and improved several times in response to the increase, complexity, and safety considerations. The National Electric Code changed in two main ways to accommodate the ever increasing need for available electricity. One, more outlets--in 1935, residential wiring required only one outlet per room. Today, there has to be one every 6 feet, to prevent the use of extension cords as permanent wiring. Two, more circuits required, those using better protection against shorts, and overloading.

The entire electrical system in the earliest days was protected from over-current, or short circuits using screwin fuses. The entire system for a house could have been a single circuit. The fuses in the 1930 wiring would have had a new window, which was first developed by Bussman in 1921. Before that the fuse was completely closed, and had a replaceable part. One of the major drawbacks of this fuse type, with the window or before, was that a penny could be inserted to replace a fuse–a very dangerous practice as it would not protect from overload or short circuit. This type of fusing was replaced in 1941 when new codes were in place, and pennies would no longer fit.

Today code requires the use of circuit breakers, first developed by Westinghouse in the 1930s as the "No-Fuse Load Center." It wasn't until the post WWII housing boom that the circuit breakers were put into common use, but by the 1960s they were in almost universal use in new construction.

Several other improvements have also been made: insulating materials, better grounding, dedicated circuits, GFCIs, conduit in commercial buildings, even color coding the wires. Wire connection now must all be in an enclosed box, unlike the knob and tube system. The connections no longer are soldered and taped, they are attached with "spinlocks" or "wire nuts ®".



In addition to the standard electrical wiring, today other systems are also installed to accommodate computers, telephones, cable, electronic locks, music systems, security and smoke alarms, and exit signs.

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THE 1872 OLD TOWN FIRE.

Ellen Sweet.

Historian.

Old Towners and a few lucky New Towners danced the night away at the Cosmopolitan Hotel until long after midnight on the evening of Friday, April 19, 1872. The *San Diego Union* reported that it was one of the most successful dances ever given in Old Town.

About 10 a.m. Saturday morning, April 20, the face of Old Town changed drastically. A fire broke out between the ceiling and the roof from a stovepipe in the old Court House building occupied by Rudolph Schiller as a general store. Flames quickly consumed the building and rapidly spread to adjacent buildings. Old Town landmarks, the Colorado House and the Franklin House, were destroyed.

Because there was no firefighting apparatus in Old Town it was a wonder that any building survived. According to the reporter for the San Diego Union, "all that saved the Seeley House (the Cosmopolitan Hotel) was the tile roof of the house of Mr. Estudillo, which prevented the fire from reaching across the street." Tile roofs then, like today, were one of the best construction features for fire protection. By the time the Hook and Ladder Company from New Town arrived on the scene, the fire had done its damage and their main service was helping with all the merchandise scattered around the Plaza.

Merchants worked frantically to save their property. However, the confusion and the mess proved profitable to the local Indians. According to the newspaper, "all of the Indians living for miles around the city of San Diego gathered together and scrambled for the coffee, sugar, etc., etc., spilled by the impatient citizens in their efforts to rescue goods from the flames." Undoubtedly there were many recyclers that day.

Fire Marshal E.W. Nottage complemented James McCoy, W.W. Stewart, and others for their services at the fire. Mr. Nottage reported these losses: M. Asher, merchandise $1600 to $1800, no insurance; D. Wallach, stock and building $2500, no insurance; R. Schiller, stock $2000, no insurance; J.S. Mannasse & Co., four buildings and merchandise $14,000, insured for $7000; Dan Clark, saloon fixtures, stock, etc. $250, no insurance; Mrs. Soledad, building occupied by Bank Exchange saloon, $200; other miscellaneous properties $300.

Mr. Wallach was lucky in that some of the merchandise he expected on the most recent steamer had not arrived. Almost immediately saloon keeper Dan Clark set up shop in another location. Some of the merchants like Mr. Schiller occupied empty spaces on the east side of the Plaza. And Mr. Mannasse decided to wait for the insurance settlement.

The opinion was frequently expressed that had the pump on the Plaza not been broken, the fire could have been stopped sooner. The original pump workmanship was supposedly so defective that it was impossible to keep it operating. And precautions were strongly urged for protecting against sheet iron stovepipes coming in contact with wood.

Fortunately photographs of Old Town had been taken by M. C.P. Fessenden the day before the fire. Those images and others by early photographers help archaeologists, historians, architects, and preservationists with projects such as the restoration of the Cosmopolitan Hotel.

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LINOLEUM.

William F. Mennell.
San Diego Coast District Services Manager.

When Albert Seeley converted the Casa de Bandini into the Cosmopolitan Hotel in 1869, he did not install bathrooms. However, a few homes in the U.S. at the time had recently converted rooms to become bathrooms. Besides plumbing, there was another important issue, the floor. Most rooms of the time had wooden floors, which could be covered with rugs, or even carpet. The first U.S. carpets were produced in 1791 when William Sprague started the first woven carpet mill in Philadelphia. The industry really took off in 1839, when Erastus Bigelow invented of the power loom for weaving carpets. But water and rugs or carpet is not a good mix. Even varnished wood is not impermeable to water, which could spill out of a tub, or worse, the toilet. Tile would have been an option, having been used as far back as the Romans, but tile does not work well over wood, as wooden floors move and could crack the tiles or grout. However, there was a more "modern" option, linoleum.

Linoleum the word is derived from the Latin words linum, which means flax, and the oleum, which means oil.

Linoleum was invented in 1860, by rubber manufacturer Fredrick Walton, who received a British patent 3 years later. He was looking for a rubber substitute, and got his inspiration by observing the skin produced by oxidized linseed oil. It was Scottish flooring manufacturer Michael Nairn that made it famous as a floor covering by introducing inlaid patterns. Within 5 years of it being patented, linoleum flooring was being shipped to the United States. The first U.S. manufacturer, the Joseph Wild Co. (later the American Linoleum Company), began production in 1874 on Staten Island. Thomas Armstrong, founder of a cork cutting company saw linoleum production as a use for his companies wasted cork powder. In a factory build near Lancaster Pennsylvania, the Armstrong Company produced brighter colors, and sold its flooring as a way to increase status, beginning in 1909. It is a leading manufacturer of linoleum today.

Unlike vinyl flooring–made from chlorinated petrochemical materials, and started to become popular in the late 1940s–linoleum is made from all natural materials: Linseed oil, made by pressing the seeds of the flax plant; Rosin, tapped from pine trees, without affecting growth; Wood flour, a very fine saw dust; Cork flour, made by grinding the bark of the cork oak, (the bark is peeled every seven to ten years without affecting the tree's growth); Limestone, very finely ground; natural pigments; and Jute, a fibrous plant.

After being outsold by vinyl for decades, linoleum is making a comeback in the 21st century, in part due to its natural content and it is 100% biodegradable, but also because it is more durable.

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STEAM POWER.

William F. Mennell.
San Diego Coast District Services Manager.

The Parsons Brothers, who were Albert Seeley's contractors in 1869 had a shop was driven by steam powered engines. Although the driving force of the Industrial Revolution, powering everything from ships to factories to mining operations, to locomotives, steam power today is considered almost obsolete. But on August 25, 2009 a new land speed record of 137.84 mph average was set -- in two official runs of 136 mph, and 151 mph -- by "The World's Fastest Kettle." This broke the old record of 127 mph set in 1906 by American Fred Marriott in a modified version of the Stanley Steamer, "The locomotive of the highways."

The purpose of a steam engine is to convert the potential energy of steam into work. The most basic example can be done with a tea kettle and a pinwheel. When the water in the kettle is boiling, it produces steam, which escapes out the spout. Holding a pinwheel in front of the escaping steam will spin the pinwheel. While this example is easy to see, it has some obvious drawbacks, you have to hold the pinwheel in the hot steam, and it is far too small to operate any equipment capable of much work. It certainly would not drive a train up a mountain.

No one person invented the steam engine. The first crude steam engine was patented in 1698 by Thomas Savery, an English military engineer and inventor. He wanted an engine that would pump water out of coal mines. His engine was based on Denis Papin's 1679 pressure cooker called "Digester." Next, in 1712, Thomas Newcomen together with John Calley built their first engine to be used for the same purpose. James Watt, a Scottish inventor and mechanical engineer, (when you hear the word Watt, as in a 100 Watt bulb, it is named after James Watt) was assigned to repair one of Newcomen's engines, and noted it was not extremely efficient. He worked to improve the design, and in 1769 patented his design, which had a separate condenser connected with a valve, and could be cool while the cylinder was hot. The main drawback to Watt's engine was that it used a push/pull operation on a pump, and most factories ran on circular motion like a water wheel would produce.

Thomas Edison may have gleaned one of his best ideas from Watt, an "invention shop." Watt, like Edison almost 200 year later, hired bright minds to invent and improve existing machines and devices. William Murdoch was one of those minds, and he designed a gear system converting the push/pull of Watt's engine to circular motion. The gear system was later refined into a connecting rod and flywheel. Gasoline powered internal combustion engines used in autos today use connecting rods and flywheels to do the same task, convert push/pull motion of cylinders into circular motion.

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STEAM POWER PART 2.

William F. Mennell.
San Diego Coast District Services Manager.

Between the late 1700s, when steam engines in factories had become the primary power source, and 1869 when Parsons Brothers had their San Diego shop, a lot had happened to the steam engine. Step by step several innovations were made. Richard Trevithick in an attempt to build a locomotive eliminated the separate condensing chamber that was the major component of Watt's design, and in 1797 built his first locomotive using pressure steam. The model failed but due to weak tracks, not the engine. Trevithick's idea was again refined by George Stephenson, who rerouted the exhaust blast to create a draught in the firebox. This added power, which meant the size and weight of the engine, could be reduced. Goldsworthy Gurney later refined Stevenson's engine even more.

The steam engine was being used to power ships, in no small part due to Robert Fulton, via William Henry, whose attempt failed, to John Fitch a friend of Henry's, who built a ship that did work but was too slow to operate at a profit, through John Stevens, who saw Fitch's boat operate, but never really made his ship run any faster. Stevens did however have a business partner, Robert Livingston, who would become instrumental when he met Robert Fulton, and became his business partner. Fulton's success in 1807 would change shipping, as in 1838 when the Great Western and the Sirius raced each other for the title of fastest Atlantic passenger steamship. The Sirius, which was designed to cross the English Channel won, but had to burn the ships furniture, and one mast to do it. The Great Western, the first steam ship designed to cross the Atlantic, arrived the next day, with 15 tons a coal still aboard. It had made the trip in 15 days. Trips from Europe, Asia, and the East Coast to San Diego also became faster as steam power was added to or replaced sailing ships. In 1789, the first U.S. patent for a steam-powered land vehicle not using tracks was granted to Oliver Evans. Steam power was everywhere.

"Some assembly is required." Transporting the massive engines was no easy task. They had to be shipped in parts, and some of the parts were still considerably heavy. But there is another more difficult problem. John Sutter ran across it when he "bought" Fort Ross from the Russians in 1841. After disassembling several building from the fort and moving them to Sacramento, he discovered that no one in Sacramento knew how to reassemble the Russian carpentry work. The same would be true for steam engines. When the new engine arrived at its location, there had to be someone there that knew how to put it together, have the tools to do that, know how to make it work, and keep it working. Engineers would sometimes accompany the larger engines to their destination. In the port town of San Diego, the problem was more easily solved then other areas, as some crew members of the incoming ships knew the steam engines well.

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THE COSMOPOLITAN HOTEL TEAM.

THERESE MURANAKA.
San Diego Coast District Associate State Archaeologist.

As the days, weeks and months go by at the Cosmopolitan Hotel project, I am amazed by the number of people from varying backgrounds that are coming together. You see it on a KPBS television program such as Nova when a group of scientists walk the Gobi Desert looking for fossils: one is a palaeontologist who specializes in vertebrates, another knows invertebrates, one is a GIS-mapper, one is a potassium-argon dating specialist, one is a cook, and one is a spy…How romantic! The Gobi Desert!

But here in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park a team of multi-disciplinary scientists, archaeologists, historians, historic architects, historic interior decorators, global positioning experts, historic demolition experts, finish carpenters, electricians, accountants, interpreters, and even SDG&E and AT&T representatives are doing something similar. The shared goal is to provide our visitors an experience from the past: the restored, earthquake-retrofit Cosmopolitan Hotel, as it looked from 1869 to1872.

A couple of years ago, historians began piecing together what was known (or knowable) about the 1827 Bandini downstairs and the 1869 Seeley upstairs. Using maps and disenos (Mexican Era boundary "designs" or maps), Bandini letters and other records, San Diego Coast District Historian Victor Walsh, local historian Ellen Sweet and translator Cynthia Hernandez drafted an historic overview of the building's history and occupants. Taking up the historic baton, local architects at IS Architecture and Heritage Architecture moved in to identify and save as many original pieces of wood, sections of adobe, and historic windows and doors as possible. Historic interiors specialist Bruce Coons of Save Our Heritage Organization was also a consultant for room configurations, staircase configurations, window and door openings, and roof and chimney lines. The team shared his personal collection of historic photos of the building through time.

District archaeologists Niloufar (Nini) Minovi and Nicole Turner have been there every day, working closely with archaeological contractor Scott Wolf of ASM Affiliates. Nicole and Scott have been doing global positioning system and other forms of mapping. They consult with teams of Soltek Pacific demolition workers, carpenters and plumbing sub-contractors who are under the capable direction of Patrick English. Patrick in turn really enjoys working with custom finish carpenters, door and window restoration specialists, and historic chimney masons in recreating the feel of an historic building. Robert Robinson, District Civil Engineer ably does all permits, inspections, and some necessary redesign.

Each new detail is interesting as we assemble to consider new finds and their implications for the modern plans. For example, a spur foundation off the main adobe toward Seeley Stables makes the adobe look even larger than the current building, requiring concrete sub-contractors to work with the archaeologists in spanning the space, and coloring the concrete span to disguise it against the dirt-colored adobe wall. Interpreter Eric Minella of Old Town Family Hospitality contributes to the debates as to which interesting historic detail should be interpreted for the general public, as the construction goes on.

The Old Town San Diego Cosmopolitan Hotel project has been better than working in the Gobi Desert (the 'Nova' program mentioned above) as we listen to each colleague's opinions, keep in mind multiple working ideas on treatments, and move forward to the grand opening. All we need now is a dinosaur…I would be very surprised, but anything is possible…