

COSMOPOLITAN CHRONICLE

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini and Cosmopolitan Hotel.
Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

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Absolutely Pure !

Ellen Sweet Historian

That was the motto for Akerman & Tuffley's Old Mission brand of olive oil. In the late 1890s and early 1900s, as home to Edward William (Will) Akerman and Robert Luther Tuffley's olive pickling plant, the old Cosmopolitan Hotel building's operations garnered honors for North San Diego (or Old Town as it was locally called). Ackerman & Tuffley's claim to a superior product, according to their promotional material, was based on purity, quality, and general excellence. They carefully blended oils from a variety of olives. They sterilized their tools and equipment. And their special advantage was storing the oil in adobe buildings which assured the correct temperature and ventilation for their product. This plus the advantage of the San Diego soil and climate were their reasons for their award winning products. Perhaps it didn't hurt that Will Akerman was married to

Ysabel Ana Altamirano, who's California and Baja California heritage no doubt included knowledge of olive preparation.

According to an article in the *San Diego Union* (April 22, 1902) explaining their successful operation, their brand of "Old Mission" was derived from use of the olive orchards from the first mission in California. Akerman & Tuffley acquired the property from the Rt. Rev. Francisco Mora, then Bishop of the diocese. They began making oil and pickling olives, but they found that their equipment was inadequate for their expanding business. Because of their need for a better facility, they moved their operation to the old Cosmopolitan Hotel in 1896.

They must have hit on the right combination because these two English entrepreneurs in Old Town won many national and international awards for their olive products. Akerman & Tuffley's exhibit of olive oil at the 1900 Paris Exposition was honored with a gold medal, one of twenty-seven gold medals awarded to California products. The award was made by pass-

ing over olive oil exhibits from Spain, Italy, and France. In 1902 they won a silver medal at the Pan-American Exposition and a gold medal at the World's Paris Exposition.

In 1910 olive crops in San Diego were only moderate and Akerman admitted that their firm had been shipping in olives from northern California for years because they could not keep up with the demand with only San Diego County crops. By 1911 Akerman & Tuffley announced plans to build a new olive processing plant a few blocks away from their leased Cosmopolitan Hotel operation. Perhaps they no longer considered the use of an old adobe building a key to their success.

