
Guide to the Hotel del Coronado Collection MS 46

Finding aid prepared by Jennifer Ho

Collection processed as part of grant project supported by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with generous funding from The Andrew Mellon Foundation.

San Diego History Center Document Collection

1649 El Prado, Suite 3

San Diego, CA, 92101

619-232-6203

June 16, 2011

Title: Hotel del Coronado Collection

Identifier/Call Number: MS 46

Contributing Institution: San Diego History Center Document Collection

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.25 Linear feet(1 box)

Date (inclusive): 1888-1998

Abstract: This collection contains items pertaining to the Hotel del Coronado and its history, as well as information on hotel expansion plans in the 1990s.

creator: Hotel del Coronado (Coronado, Calif.).

Biographical / Historical Notes

The Hotel del Coronado was established by Elisha S. Babcock of Indiana and Hampton L. Story of Chicago who were rabbit hunting in Coronado in 1884 and saw the potential for a grand seaside resort. Babcock and Story combined forces with Jacob Gruendike, president of the First National Bank of San Diego, to purchase the Coronado peninsula in 1885 for \$110,000, and formed the Coronado Beach Company to finance Babcock and Story's seaside resort vision. In 1888 their hotel, the Hotel del Coronado, opened to great national acclaim. Designed by James and Merritt Reid of Reid & Reid in a Queen Anne Victorian style, the Hotel del Coronado contained a dining room with a seating capacity of 1,000, 750 guest rooms, and a bowling alley, theater, and ballroom. The hotel was the first large structure in the country to utilize electricity for lighting. A hotel legend states that Thomas Edison himself directed the installation of its electrical wiring, although this remains unverified. Since the hotel's opening, its guests have included members of royalty, eleven United States presidents, and a myriad of notable personalities and celebrities. Proposed property expansions in the late 1990s caused local controversy as owners made plans to develop and modernize amidst the protests of residents and longtime fans of the hotel. Despite this, the hotel continues to be extremely popular with tourists and locals alike. The Hotel del Coronado has been honored with numerous accolades and distinctions, including designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1977 and being named one of the Top Ten Resorts in the World by USA Today in 2008.

Scope and Content

The collection consists of items pertaining to the Hotel del Coronado. Highlights include marketing brochures, narratives on hotel history, guest and visitor information, and event information. There are also documents on the Hotel's controversial expansion plans in the late 1990s, including plans, news articles, and correspondence.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into two series:

Series I: Hotel Information

Series II: Hotel Expansion Proposal

Within each series, items are arranged by subject.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

Some booklets have loose bindings. (6/16/11)

Preferred Citation

Hotel del Coronado Collection, MS 46, San Diego History Center Document Collection, San Diego, CA.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Jennifer Ho on June 16, 2011.

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Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The San Diego History Center (SDHC) holds the copyright to any unpublished materials. SDHC Library regulations do apply.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Accession numbers 810721, 820701 and 771103B.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Babcock, Elisha S.

California Preservation Foundation.

California. Office of Historic Preservation .
Gruendike, Jacob
Hotel del Coronado (Coronado, Calif.).
National Historic Landmarks Program (U.S.).
National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States. Western Regional Office .
Reid & Reid.
Reid, James
Reid, Merritt
Save Our Heritage Organization (SOHO).
Spreckels, John Diedrich, b. 1853
Story, Hampton L.
Architecture
Coronado (Calif.)
Historic hotels
Hotels -- California
San Diego (Calif.)
Tourism

Series I: **Hotel Information**

- Box-folder 1:1 **Hotel history: booklets and brochures, marketing ephemera, 1937-1971 and undated**
Box-folder 1:2 **Hotel history: narratives and commentary, 1949-1974 and undated**
 Includes:
 Copy of thesis, educational narratives, and letter correcting inaccurately reported hotel history.
- Box-folder 1:3 **Thomas Edison hotel legend, correspondence and article, 1988-1993 and undated**
Box-folder 1:4 **Hotel and visitor information, marketing ephemera, 1888-1985 and undated**
 Includes:
 Copy of article recalling experience at Hotel, December 22, 1888.
 Dinner menu, May 8, 1901.
 Letter regarding hotel reservation request from Chicago, January 26, 1911.
 Newsletter and brochures outlining available Hotel resources and planned activities.
 Souvenir and informational picture-books.
 Brochures on room rates and hosting events at Hotel.
- Box-folder 1:5 **Invitations and programs for hotel events, 1902-1978 and undated**
 Includes:
 Invitation (metal) to Official National Landmark Dedication Ceremonies for the Hotel, October 30, 1977.

Series II: **Hotel Expansion Proposal**

- Box-folder 1:6 **Expansion plans, undated**
 Includes:
 Color photograph with marker notations of "structural buildable planning area 2."
 Copies of Hotel del Coronado Specific Plan Exhibits illustrations.

Box-folder 1:7

Correspondence, 1995 June 13-1998 January 17 and undated

Includes:

Letters discussing drafts of the Hotel del Coronado Specific Plan and Hotel's status as a National Historic Landmark.

Copy of Historic Resource Review, Coronado Municipal Code.

Box-folder 1:8

News articles, 1995 June 7-1997 May 23 and undated

Box-folder 1:9

Residents' responses, 1995 June 12-1997 July 23 and undated

Includes:

Correspondence and letters to the Editor (newspaper).