

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

Ser. No. 0138-03C

HABS _____ HAER _____ NR 3 SHL _____ Loc _____
UTM: A 10/713950/3907670 B _____
C _____ D _____

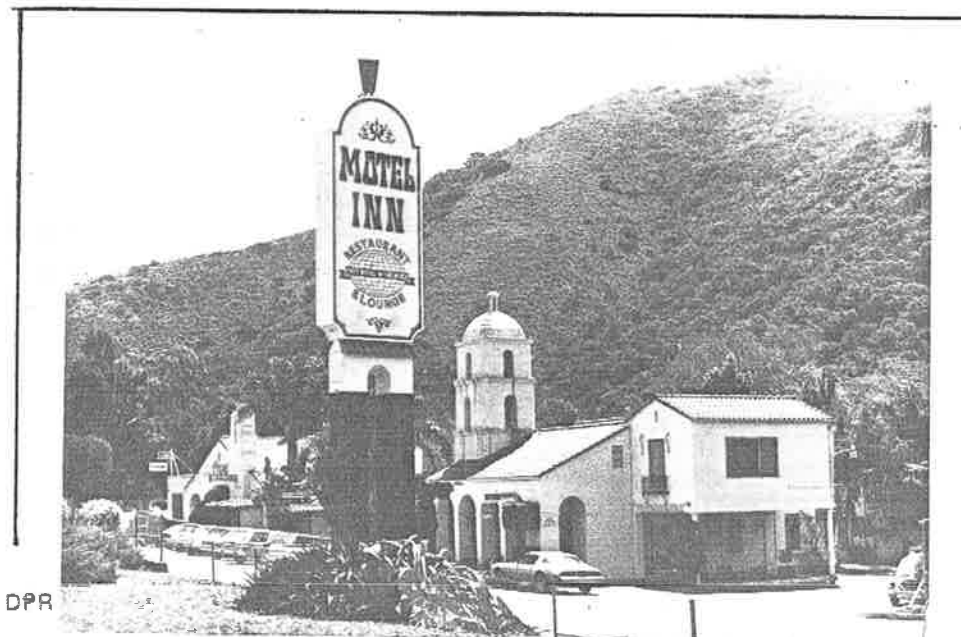
IDENTIFICATION

1. Common name: Motel Inn
2. Historic name: Milestone Motel Inn
3. Street or rural address: 2223 Monterey
City San Luis Obispo Zip 93401 County San Luis Obispo
4. Parcel number: 04-511-09
5. Present Owner: Milt Grau Address: 2223 Monterey
City San Luis Obispo Zip 93401 Ownership is: Public _____ Private X
6. Present Use: Hotel Original use: Hotel

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural style: Mission Revival
- 7b. Briefly describe the present *physical description* of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

This Mediterranean style/Spanish Revival building has multiple gables and red tile roofs and parapets. There is a tower with a copper dome on top. Significant of the style, front windows are 3/3 square windows with wood framing. There are arched single paned windows. Roof gables have detailed central vents. Scroll work along towers and entrances. The structure is brick and stucco. There is also a short colonade and arcade in the front facing facade.



8. Construction date:
Estimated _____ Factual 1924-25
9. Architect Alfred and Arthur Hiereman
10. Builder Unknown
11. Approx. property size (in feet)
Frontage 300' Depth 600'
or approx. acreage _____
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)
December 1982

13. Condition: Excellent _____ Good ☒ Fair _____ Deteriorated _____ No longer in existence _____
14. Alterations: Bungalow court remodeled
15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land _____ Scattered buildings _____ Densely built-up _____
Residential _____ Industrial _____ Commercial ☒ Other: hotels and motels
16. Threats to site: None known ☒ Private development _____ Zoning _____ Vandalism _____
Public Works project _____ Other: _____
17. Is the structure: On its original site? yes Moved? _____ Unknown? _____
18. Related features: _____

SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)

The Motel Inn was built in 1924-25. Originally called the Milestone Motel, local stories claim that it was the first place in the world to call itself a "motel." Alfred Heineman, the brother of Arthur Heineman, designed this distinguished Mission Revival bungalowoid. Arthur Heineman has been called the "Inventor of the California Bungalow Court." Although the building has been remodeled over the years, its dome shaped tower, smooth plaster walls make it San Luis Obispo's finest example of the Mission Revival which permeated much of California building traditions in the first twenty or thirty years of this century.

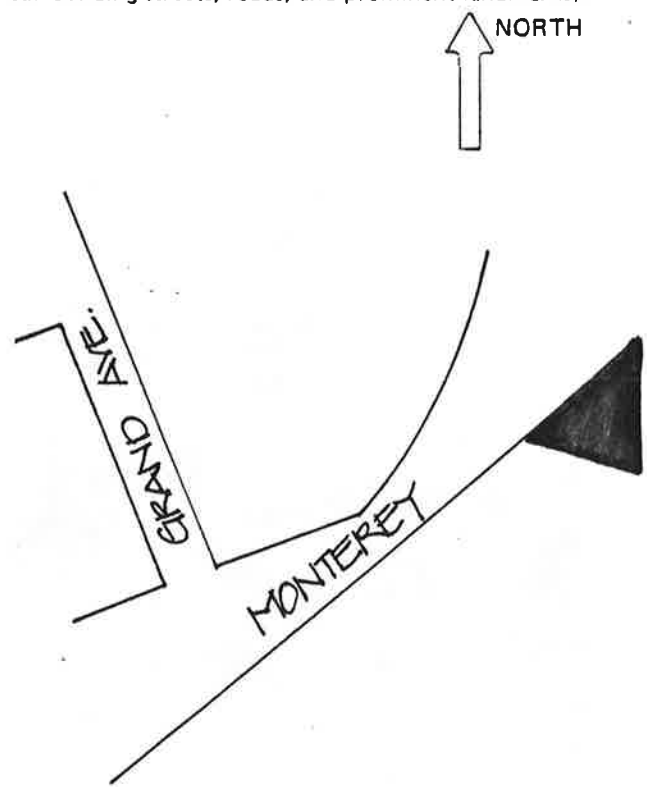
20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)
Architecture 1 Arts & Leisure _____
Economic/Industrial _____ Exploration/Settlement _____
Government _____ Military _____
Religion _____ Social/Education _____

21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).

Gebbhard, R. and Winter, D. A.
Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California, 1977

22. Date form prepared June 30, 1983
By (name) Historic Res. Survey Staff
Organization City of San Luis Obispo
Address: P.O. Box 321
City San Luis Obispo Zip 93401
Phone: (805) 541-1000

Locational sketch map (draw and label site and surrounding streets, roads, and prominent landmarks):



History and Description:

The Motel Inn claims to be the first motel in the world. The word motel originated in San Luis Obispo, California. It stems from the combination of "motor hotel."

Arthur Heinman who was the architect for the building originated the name in 1924. The word never entered the dictionary until 1950.

The architecture of the Motel Inn was California Spanish Revival. The land on which the building was built was owned by Neil Cook, and the construction was subsidized by the Milestone Corporation.

The motel was part of the "Hamilton Chain of Hotels", stretching from San Diego to San Francisco. Harry Elliott, who was a partner in this chain managed the motel when it first opened. The motel could accommodate 160 and was considered by many as an exclusive hotel.

The rooms or "bungalows" as they were called, were separate units, each containing their own shower, bathtub, washbasin, toilet, and telephone. Each bungalow had central heating throughout and garages were available for each room. Some of the rooms also contained kitchenettes.

The Spanish motif was carried out throughout the buildings. There was a Spanish lantern at every entrance. The main desk in the lobby was made of copper and bounded with strips of wrought iron like a Spanish chest.

The office and dining room were situated in the foreground with a "ramada" or corridor connecting them. There were windows on both sides of the corridor with one side facing the highway and the other facing the court space around which the buildings were centered.

The motel opened on December 12, 1925 and today resembles it's original condition with the exception of a swimming pool which is located in the central court space, and a number of signs and billboards.

Sources:

San Luis Obispo Daily Telegram, December 12, 1925 and January 27, 1926

San Luis Obispo County Museum

Louisiana Dart, Curator, San Luis Obispo County Historical Museum, who attended the opening

MASONIC CEREMONY IMPRESSIVE

Guests Welcomed at Milestone Inn

MOTEL OPENS FOR SERVICE TO MOTOR PUBLIC

San Luis Obispo Hostelry Is Model of Perfection and Comfort.

BUILDINGS ARE COMPLETE

Capacity of Housing Units Taxed on First Day of Existence.

With the opening of the motel Saturday by the Milestone Interstate Corporation, San Luis Obispo can now boast the distinction of being the first city in the United States to have one of these hostleries, a place which will accommodate 160 persons and which was built by the Milestone Interstate Corporation as the first unit of a series of motels dedicated primarily to the service of the motoring public.

In the erection of the motel here, San Luis Obispo has added to its list of places for the traveling public one that soon will be known up and down the coast as a unit of a series of the most comfortable, economical and hospitable inns that can be found anywhere in the country.

That the motel is assured of success is indicated in the attention that has been given to details often considered of minor importance when the public is to be dealt with, by Arthur S. Heineman, president of the corporation and an architect. The whole series of buildings making up the motel breathes an atmosphere of the old Spanish mission, of friendliness, warmth and comfort.

The Spanish atmosphere is encountered as one approaches the motel beside the highway from either direction. The motel bungalows with their red tile roofs and colored ornaments, nestle at the foot of a mountain at the northern city limits.

A traveler arriving at night, or at any other time, need not climb out of his car and go into the office to register. Instead, the man in charge comes out to the car and one may register without leaving the car at all.

The Duty of All

If for a week you could have as a guest in your home the moulder of the destinies of your children, would you not bend every effort to obtain their admiration and good will?

This is the opportunity that is to be offered to the citizens of San Luis Obispo next week with the annual four day institute of the teachers of four of the Central Coast Counties.

Through the efforts of the Merchants' Credit Association, the educational heads of San Luis Obispo and the teachers themselves more than 1000 men and women who are responsible for the educational care of our children will be our guests for a four day period. The ordinary details of a large educational convention have been well taken care of by committees appointed for that purpose. It remains for the citizens of San Luis Obispo to extend that warmth of greeting which is fast making for the city an enviable reputation as a host.

Let us leave nothing undone for the entertainment and comfort of these men and women who are so vitally connected with the very heartstrings of the future.

Let these educators carry from San Luis Obispo city and county a message that will make us the envied of our neighbors.

Insatiable Appetite for News

Apologies to Pismo Beach. Or at least to that portion of the population who were deprived of their Morning Tribune-Herald Saturday morning.

It seems that at least one person at Pismo Beach has an insatiable appetite for the news of the world as supplied by the Tribune-Herald and in order to stay this craving for news appropriated both the packages intended for delivery through the postoffice and by sale on the news stands.

Hence the apology.

State Societies May Be Organized Here

Shall state societies be organized in San Luis Obispo?

The question is being brought continually to the attention of the Chamber of Commerce as to what middle western states are represented in the local population and suggestions have been made that state societies be organized here.

Anyone interested in the formation of these state societies is requested to communicate with the Chamber of Commerce and steps will be taken looking

TEACHERS HERE FOR MEETING

Vanguard of Instructors Pave Way for Big Convention.

Teachers from San Benito, Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties will begin arriving in San Luis Obispo Sunday for the convention of the central coast section of the California State Teachers' Association which opens here Monday afternoon for a four-day meeting.

Members of the local committees were in session Saturday morning making arrangements for meeting trains and escorting visitors to the various hotels and private residences in the city where they will be housed during the convention.

Approximately 1600 teachers will be here for the convention, which is being sponsored by the Merchants' Credit Association. The main convention hall will be the Civic Auditorium.

TAKES AUTO TO ESKIMOS' LAND

Trapper Brings His Family to Civilization and Drives Car Back.

HERB LAKE, Manitoba, Dec. 12.—(United Press.)—Far to the north, a small automobile chugs its way over the ice and snow, first vehicle of its kind to invade the land of the Eskimos.

It was taken to the Far North by John Harris, who has just returned there after marketing here a large quantity of furs.

On his visit to civilization, Harris brought his Eskimo wife and three children, "Just to give them a treat," and if their wide and wondering eyes were criterion, it was a treat.

When Harris returned he took with him the small automobile.

Mail Early, Shop Early For Xmas

Postmaster Advises Not to Wait Until Last Minute.

"Mail your packages early." This is the advice of P. A. H. Arata, postmaster, to those who contemplate sending Christmas packages east. Packages and letters going east should be mailed not later than the early part of next week, he said, explaining that congestion of mails at the Christmas season results in the packages not being handled as speedily as at other times.

People seem behind time this year in beginning mailing of gifts, according to Mr. Arata. His suggestion is that they be mailed now with a notation requesting that the receivers not open them until Christmas if it is the desire of the sender that the packages be not opened until then.

There will be no mail deliveries on Christmas Day except packages or letters bearing special delivery stamps.

SANTA SPEAKS 7 LANGUAGES

Government Placards Posted Among Foreigners Tell of Christmas.

PORTLAND, Ore., Dec. 12.—(United Press.)—"Przeżycie Świe Powinnowania Gwiazdkow i Noworoczne Pozostawienie Przekazem Pieniężnym."

Which might be a typographical error or might mean almost anything to many people, but which, when properly translated, means: "Say Merry Christmas with a postal money order."

It's just a sample of the thoroughness of government advertising, and is only one of the seven mystifying placards received here by Postmaster Jones to be placed in conspicuous places in sections of the city inhabited by the foreign population.

There are others, such as:

New Postoffice Cornerstone is Sealed in Place

Parade Precedes Impressive Ritual by Masonic Order; Documents for Posterity Placed in Bronze Casket; Thousands Present.

Several thousand men, women and children assembled at Morro and Marsh streets Saturday afternoon to witness the ceremonies conducted by the grand lodge of Masons in laying the cornerstone for the new postoffice building.

Flags floated in the breeze over the seats where the grand officers were seated and the thousands of people crowded around the place where the cornerstone was laid as the Municipal Band opened the program with a selection.

It was the largest and most colorful throng of people that ever assembled in the county for such an occasion.

The band led the parade. Knights Templar, in full uniform, came next in line and they were followed by Boy Scouts, Odd Fellows in uniform, the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, postal employees and Masons.

TOY SAYS GET FINANCES NOW

Fight for Continuation of Federal Aid Should Begin Now.

SACRAMENTO, Dec. 12.—(United Press.)—The real fight for continuation of federal aid for highways should begin now congress has convened, Harvey M. Toy, chairman of the California highway commission, said recently on his return from the Detroit convention of the American Association of State Highway Officials.

Toy attended the convention as the official representative of California and also as vice president of the Western Road association, an organization of the eleven western states. He was chairman of the resolutions committee.

The convention adopted a resolution asking appropriations of \$60,000,000 a year for the fiscal years 1925 and 1926 for construction of rural post roads and \$3,000,000 a year during the same period for forest highways. Present appropriations do not extend beyond June 30, 1927.

National welfare depends on a system of highways connecting all sections of the country, those in attendance at the meeting were

Parts of the streets bordering the postoffice site were roped off to prevent disturbance during the ceremony. After the grand officers of the Masonic fraternity, who were in charge of the ceremony, had taken their seats there was a selection by the band and this was followed by prayer and invocation by the grand chaplain. Then "America" was sung by the high school chorus.

Postmaster P. A. H. Arata opened the ceremonies with a short address of welcome in which he invited Grand Master Albert E. Boynton to perform the ceremony. This was followed by the address of the grand master accepting the invitation.

Frank Throop then presented the grand master with a silver trestle and the ceremony of laying the cornerstone and sealing the corner within was commenced by the grand officers. The address of the grand master was read and the last was the benediction. Interspersed with the various numbers of the program were musical selections.

In the main address of the occasion, Rev. Herbert F. Shaw, grand orator, spoke of the building as being "the consummation of the hopes of many years," a representation of the national government in the community, a representation of the inheritance which is ours as American citizens and behind which is the Constitution. He also spoke of religion as being "that sustaining element of the government and the civilization which the people of this country enjoy."

"A postoffice affects the lives of more people than any other individual building. It is a building through which love and sympathy

(Continued on page four.)

live nations in the technical development of aircraft for military purposes."

Comforting as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far. Being "technically abreast" of other countries isn't being as well prepared as other countries.

France also is technically all right, but what is more important, she has 2,500 fighting airplanes.

This country tried three flying machines and couldn't get one of them to cover the distance from California to Hawaii. Technically, they may have been all right, but when it came to flying there was something wrong.

This country needs flying machines, and many of them, not "technical equality" with other nations.

Secretary Mellon predicts great prosperity for the United States and world-wide economic stabilization."

The United States ought to be prosperous, with good crops, all the money, a debt that we can afford, big as it is, Coolidge in the White House, and Mellon in the treasury.

The people will be fortunate if Mellon consents to continue working for the people instead of working for himself. The rumor that he intends going "back to Pittsburgh" is an evil rumor for prosperity.

Great Britain, France and Italy have recognized the Russian government sufficiently to do business, sell goods and get cash. But the British monarchy, French republic and Italian autocracy, take their "Russian cordiality" as a small boy takes castor oil.

The Russian ambassador Rakovsky, presenting his credentials to the French president, wanted the Russian national hymn played by the French band, in accordance with custom. But Russia's hymn, "The Red Internationale," was not played. Rakovsky was greeted with a "flourish of bugles" instead.

The motto of western Europe is "we will take your

(Continued on page two.)

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A traveler arriving at night, or at any other time, need not climb out of his car and go into the office to register. Instead, the man in charge comes out to the car and one may register without leaving the car at all. That done an escort is sent with the traveler to show him his rooms, his apartment or whatever kind of combination in rooms he wants.

Thus persons traveling may go to their rooms, wash and clean up before going to the lobby or to the dining room. Of course there is a garage for each car and the escort after showing the people to their rooms, takes the car to the garage.

The office and the dining room are in the foreground of the motel buildings and connecting them is the "Ramada," or corridor, with windows on both sides, in which people may eat should they not care to go into the dining room.

Looking from one side of the "Ramada" one gets a view of the

(Continued on page four.)

guests for a four day period. The ordinary details of educational convention have been well taken care of by committees appointed for that purpose. It remains for the citizens of San Luis Obispo to extend that warmth which is fast making for the city an enviable reputation.

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Anyone interested in the formation of these state societies is requested to communicate with the Chamber of Commerce and steps will be taken looking toward their organization. It is believed that such societies would be popular and mutually beneficial.

Handball Champs Named at Local Hi

B. Chlentzos and Souza have won the high school championship in the handball doubles. In the semi-finals they defeated Mello and Andrested, 11-0 and 11-1 and won from H. Chlentzos and Elliott 5-11, 11-6 and 11-10. In the finals they took Carter and Castro down for the championship by a score of 11-7 and 11-6.

FEEBLE-MINDED NOT CRIMINAL

Authority Declares Not Troublesome Environment

SAN FRANCISCO, (United Press).—The many persons that feeble-mindedness and crime walk hand in hand is wrong, according to Kenton Bray, local representative of the Sonoma State Prison. It is because the feeble-minded are open to suggestion and intelligent, but dishonest, she declared in a recent address which she maintained that the feeble-minded are a captive mental trait suggesting good things in those mentally handicapped occupations which match their capacity.

There are 465 mentally defective children in 31 special schools in San Francisco, and in only one came before court. According to Mr. Bray, records proved that the feeble-minded prevents these unfortunate from preying to designing persons.

The San Francisco school authorities make no effort to force the feeble-minded into school routine, but train them in self-supporting occupations. Mrs. Bray pointed out that certain boys now in the state prison were black whereas, before they came to the prison, he could do nothing and was in danger of being killed by some smart criminal.

Left alone, the feeble-minded not get into trouble, but when they are trained to be self-supporting, authority declares.

FORM CIVIC

The Cambria farm will meet at the Harmony society room Friday evening. There will be a discussion regarding eliminating calves.

PISMO PAVILION

Big Time! Sat. Nite, D

DANCE

DANCING

DANCE

CORNERSTONE MOTEL OPENS IS LAID IN PLACE FOR SERVICE TO MOTOR PUBLIC

(Continued From Page One)
will be expressed and it will be a servant to friends who are parted," he said. "It will bring consolation to lonely hearts grieving for absent friends, it will serve as a bond between scattered families and enlarge the common life of people, bringing knowledge, inspiration and hope to the community."
"It is the great common denomination which serves alike rich and poor, the lettered and the unlettered, the babe in arms and him in whitened locks, the aged." Rev. Shaw pointed to the fluttering flag, declaring "It represents the national government and a part of the national government put down in your community."

He made an appeal for an awakened conscience on loyalty to the constitution. "Lincoln," he declared, "said no nation can exist half slave and half free and no nation can exist where men and women declare they will obey only such laws as suit their own personal desires." He also spoke on the need for a reawakened conscience on the underlying principles of the American home and referred to statistics, in this connection, to show that in California in 1924 there was one divorce in every five marriages and that in the entire United States the average was one to ten.

He spoke of the need for emphasizing the principles of the American home, "which has been the foundation of our civilization." He also spoke of the inheritance of the padres from the date 1772, the patron saint, San Luis, and the legend of the painted rock and the days of Cortez when there were people here having a definite religion of humility and service and faith in the Great Spirit.

Rev. Shaw, during his address, referred to the "E Pluribus Unum," meaning one yet many, on the American dollar, expressing the hope that the postoffice will prove a blessing in that out of the many divergent thoughts and personalities there will be one dominant, that being a united effort for the community.

Following are the men who filled the offices of the Masonic fraternity at the ceremonies:

Albert E. Boynton, grand master; Walter D. Adrance, deputy grand master; Warren G. Overpack, senior grand warden; Sidney E. Bretherton, Jr., junior grand warden. Victor Ward, grand treasurer; John Whitcher, grand secretary; Thomas J. Baker, grand lecturer; Frank S. Lowell, grand chaplain; Rev. Herbert P. Shaw, grand orator; Albert M. Gammons, assistant grand secretary; Henry G. Mathewson, grand marshal; Walter A. Stewart, grand

(Continued from page one.)
highway and looking in the other direction one sees the court space around which the buildings center and upon which grass is to be planted. Walks will run through the grounds connecting the buildings and over these walks and the grass plots there will be colored Spanish awnings.

Hanging at the entrance of each of the buildings is a little Spanish lantern and these together with the colored iron grill work, the colorings in the buildings themselves, soft lights and the atmosphere of peace, which goes with it all give a romantic aspect to the whole place.

In the lobby there is a large fireplace and the desk is made of copper and bound with strips of wrought iron like a Spanish chest. Hanging in the center of the little gate which gives admittance to the space back of the desk is a bell which tinkles merrily when it is rung to summon someone.

There are about 75 rooms proper but including those of the apartments there are nearly 100. The corporation has carried out as nearly as possible in a commercial way the effects of the old missions in both the interior and exterior.

Each room has a shower, or bathtub, wash basin and toilet. There are telephones in each room connected with a central switchboard, there is a central heating plant and all have good ventilation, plenty of space and all are carpeted and decorated with highest quality material in the way of window curtains and the like.

The walls are beautifully tinted, many of them to give shadow effects, and the furniture is of walnut. In fact the entire appointments of these rooms are as elaborate and distinctive as any that could be found in the best of hotels.

There are several different types of rooms, the standard, which contains four rooms; the sitting room apartment, for two couples; the living room apartments, for two couples; two de luxe apartment, and hotel rooms.

In fact there are rooms "to fit the whole motor travelling public," Mr. Heineman, who has made a study of the whole situation, declares. The combinations are such that two couples, if they so desire, may have a double apartment with a large room in the front, where they may spend their evenings socially without having to sit in a bedroom.

The baths for the rooms are conveniently arranged, there are rear

Union Hardware & Plumbing Co. BOYS AND GIRLS

BROWNIE ROLLER SKATES are real skates. They must be, to stand the knocks. They are built with a bridge-like truss of pressed steel that gives the skate enormous strength, and protects the arch of the foot. The truss is free from any holes that would weaken it. The wheels are compact, the sixteen ball bearings fitting into ball races made of pressed, cold rolled steel and hardened. The genuine leather ankle strap is not fastened to the skates by rivets, so if it is lost, or wears out, can be replaced by another in just a minute. The thick "springy" rubber cushions prevent jar.

Good Brownie
SKATE
\$1.9
Per Pair

Brownie Roller Skates can be adjusted in a minute to fit any shoe.

Roller skating is real fun and takes boys and girls out into the open air and the exercise that puts healthy red in their veins, builds "pep" and ambition.

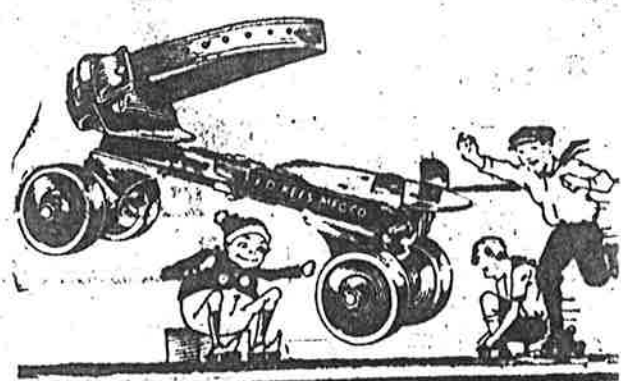
UNION HARDWARE & PLUMBING

JOHNSON BROS.

725 Higuera St.

Phone 43

119



Don't Pay Bills Two

THIS may have happened to some of you. You give cash in payment for something but it may be avoided by having an Account in the Citizens State Bank. May opening such an Account in this Bank today.

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of Stockton,
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Luis Obispo

meaning one yet many on the
American dollar, expressing the
hope that the postoffice will pro-
a blessing in that out of the man,
divergent thoughts and personalities
there will be one dominant, that
being a united effort for the com-
munity.

Following are the men who filled
the offices of the Masonic frater-
nity at the ceremonies:

Albert E. Boynton, grand master;
Walter D. Adriance, deputy grand
master; Warren G. Overpack, senior
grand warden; Sidney E. Bretherton,
Jr., junior grand warden. Victor
Ward, grand treasurer; John
Whischer, grand secretary; Thomas J.
Baker, grand lecturer; Frank S.
Lowell, grand chaplain; Rev. Her-
bert P. Shaw, grand orator; Albert
H. Gammons, assistant grand sec-
retary; Henry G. Mathewson, grand
marshal; Walter A. Stewart, grand
standard bearer; Casper J. Welr,
grand sword bearer; Grant L. Cram-
er, grand Bible bearer; Henry T.
Korther, senior grand deacon; Her-
man L. Anderson, junior grand dea-
con; Le Roy F. McClellan, senior
grand steward; Walter L. Ramage,
junior grand steward; Marius G. Sal-
minda, grand pursuivant; Ruber R.
Long, grand organist; Carl L.
Schulze, grand tiler; Guy D. Martin,
chief architect; William V. Gahan,
brother with corn; William E. Yost,
brother with wine; Lloyd D. Balder-
son, brother with oil.

Following is the list of articles
deposited in the cornerstone of the
United States Post Office building:

Personal letter of congratulations
(to Walter D. Adriance) from Cal-
vin S. Coolidge, President of the
United States of America.

Personal letter of congratulations
from Harry S. New, Postmaster
General of the United States of
America.

Personal letter of congratulations
from Arthur M. Free, Congressman,
Eighth Congressional District of
California.

List of signatures of United States
Federal Officials in the County of
San Luis Obispo, California.

Signatures of officials and em-
ployees of the United States Post
Office at San Luis Obispo, Califor-
nia, December 12th, 1925.

Signatures of officials and deputy
officials of the county of San Luis
Obispo, California.

Signatures of the officials and
deputy officials of the city of San
Luis Obispo, California.

Photograph of the City of San
Luis Obispo.

Population of the City of San Luis
Obispo, last official census, 1920.

Population of the county of San
Luis Obispo, last official census in
1920.

Estimated population of the city
of San Luis Obispo, December 12th,
1925.

U. S. Postage Stamps, U. S. Docu-
mentary Stamps, postage due, special
handling stamps and special deliv-
ery stamps, in all denominations
from one-half cent to fifty cents, in
use during the current year, at San
Luis Obispo, U. S. Post Office.

Coins of the United States of
America of the issue of 1925.

List of postmasters for the city
of San Luis Obispo, since the estab-
lishment of the postoffice July 28th

fects, and the rooms of
In fact the entire appointments of
these rooms are as elaborate and
distinctive as any that could be
found in the best of hotels.

There are several different types
of rooms, the standard, which con-
tains four rooms; the sitting room
apartment, for two couples; the liv-
ing room apartments, for two cou-
ples; two de luxe apartment, and
hotel rooms.

In fact there are rooms "to fit the
whole motor traveling public," Mr.
Heineman, who has made a study
of the whole situation, declares. The
combinations are such that two cou-
ples, if they so desire, may have a
double apartment with a large room
in the front, where they may spend
their evenings socially without hav-
ing to sit in a bedroom.

The baths for the rooms are con-
veniently arranged, there are rear
entrances to some of the buildings
which lead directly to the garages,
there is plenty of light in all of the
rooms and the windows are heavily
grilled so there is no danger of the
places being burglarized.


At the rear section of the court
there are several rooms that have
been fitted up for the motel aids
and there are also rooms for chauf-
feurs. The store room, which con-
tains the best brands of food, is lo-
cated in the rear of the site.

Rex Davy, former steward at some
of the most exclusive hotels in the
country, is in charge of the culinary
department and he declared there
would be nothing served at the
motel that was not of the best qual-
ity. Furthermore, the prices will be
popular.

The kitchen is thoroughly and
modernly equipped and the cooking
is done in view of the people who
may care to sit at the counter. The
motel has its own refrigerator plant
and it is the aim of the manage-
ment to make the motel popular for
its good food as well as for its ser-
vice in the way of rooms.

In fact, the plan is to make peo-
(Continued on page six.)

Promising



Don't Pay Bills

THIS may have happened to some
give cash in payment for some
but it may be avoided by havi
Account in the Citizens State Bank.
opening such an Account in this Ban

CITIZEN'S STATE
"THE HOME BANK"
of San Luis Obispo

Mother's Cooking Task Because She Uses BUTTER

If you wish good food, use butter.
On the Table.
In Cooking, Frying and Roasting.
In Seasoning Meats, Fish and Vegeta
In making Pies and all kinds of Cak
In Desserts, Puddings and Sauces.
In Candy, Sweets and Delicacies.

Butter used in cooking saves the housew
ure. There is no substitute f

Lily Brand Ice C
Cheese—Milk—C

Los Angeles Crea

Phone 26

MARKETS

The following are current Los An-
geles market prices culled for the
benefit of San Luis Obispo county
agriculturists. The quotations are
changed daily to conform to the
market fluctuations.

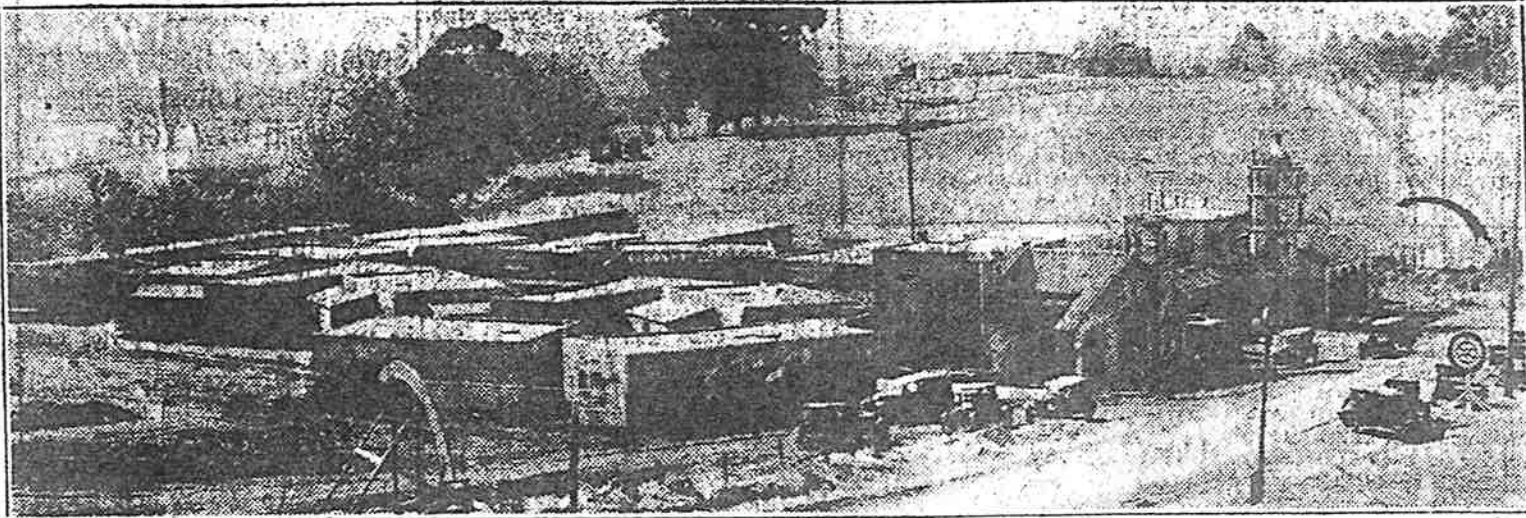
Fruits and Vegetables.
PEAS—San Diego, Imperial, Con-
chella: Mostly 8@9c, poorer, 5@7c.
LETTUCE—Local: Best, \$1.00@
\$1.25; Northern, \$3.00@3.25 per pack-
ed crate.
ONIONS—Local: Sacked Spanish,
mostly \$2.25@2.50 per cwt. North-

white, \$6
\$11.75; r
Garvanza
\$7.50

LOS A
ter, fifty
Eggs,
forty-two
LOS A
ter, 50c.
Eggs,

STAPL
EGGS
BUTT

Motel Promises to Be Mecca for Tourists



(Continued from page four.)

ple comfortable amid surroundings that will not be formal. A traveler may join with others in the lobby and be a part of the big family, or he may stay in the privacy of his rooms, just as feels.

For those who do not care to go to the dining room they will find in the bungalow apartment a kitchenette. Each apartment is completely furnished with comfortable beds and bed couches with bedding complete, easy chairs, electric lights and the like.

The Milestone motel plan comprehends a chain of motels on the Pacific coast from San Diego to Seattle, a milestone at the end of each day's normal motor run. They will be built in convenient locations at cities along the main traveled highways.

The plumbing work of the Motel is the work of the Union Hardware and Plumbing Company of this city. It is one of the largest contracts ever placed in this section and the work of this local firm is being commended on every side by the people connected with the Motel concern.

The electrical work was all installed by the Valley Electric Com-

pany and in round figures Mr. Hutchins explains that there is over 15,000 feet of conduit and all wires under ground are in lead cables. Rigid iron conduit is used throughout, as are Westinghouse Mazda lamps. The laundry was equipped with an Utenco ironer and Rotex washing machine by this firm as is the complete kitchen equipment.

The landscape work is by Shurrara, the well known firm of florists and landscapers.

A complete service station for the care of the automobiles is being erected by the Pacific Coast Service Station which at the present time are operating one of the largest service stations along the coast highway at the south entrance of town. This will give them two complete stations at each end of town.

C. E. "Doc" Freeman, local sign man, put in all signs and lettering in the Motel as well as the attractive road signs along the highway.

The Holmes Bed Company of Los Angeles have the contract for the bed couches.

The Foré Pettebone Company supplied the electrical fixtures and the Western Metal Crafts Company supplied the iron fixtures used throughout in decorations.

THE HOLMES' COUCH BEDS

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MOTEL

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Doug Parker/Telegram-Tribune

Owner Betty Grau stands in front of the Motel Inn, the world's first motel built in 1925.

First motel marks 60th year

By Dan Stephens
Telegram-Tribune

Before Magic Fingers and vibrating beds. Before vacancy and no vacancy signs.

Even before Bibles on night-stands, motorists prayed their cars would not conk out and strand them on the open road for a night.

Deliverance came in 1925 when the world's first motel opened in San Luis Obispo, the Motel Inn.

No other motel — from Tasmania to Albania, from Berlin to Peoria — can lay claim to such an honor.

Today, 60 years later, the landmark remains, as do 7,000 of its offspring scattered throughout the state, the motels of California.

They all borrowed the shelter-to-the-weary-motorist concept as did the 35,560 other lodging establishments nationwide, everything from Howard Johnson to Best Western.

Dec. 12 marks the 60th anniversary of the opening of the Motel Inn, the world's oldest motel.

"We're not going to do any celebrating this month," said Betty Grau, owner of the 35-unit motel on Monterey Street at the base of the Cuesta Grade.

"We're too busy. Today, I had three banquets. We'll celebrate after the holidays on Jan. 12."

Miniature celebrations occur almost everyday.

"One couple came up and said they were married here," said Grau who with her husband, Milton, bought the place in 1976.

"They said they had the wedding reception here and they try to come back on their anniversary ever year," she said.

Little has changed since the doors first opened.

The miniature golf course, a hit

Please see Motel Inn, 3/A

Motel Inn

TelegramTribune 12-12-85

Continued from 1/A

in the 1920s and 1930s, is gone. And the faded black-and-white portraits left behind by the famous are collecting dust somewhere.

And one other little change: the price has gone up.

On Dec. 12, 1925 the first wayfarer paid \$2 a night. Today it's \$38 for double occupancy, Grau said.

Save for those, the Spanish style building nestled in the foothills of the Santa Lucia range, remains to serve the motorists much as it did in the roaring 20s.

Originally called a Mo-Tel — Mo standing for motorist; Tel standing for hotel — the Motel Inn was the brainchild of Arthur Heineman, a Pasadena architect and developer.

He envisioned a rest stop for motorists. A place to cool their overheated cars and a place for the driver and passengers to let off steam before traveling on the next day to Los Angeles or San Francisco.

Heineman had no clue his roadside lodging idea would one day spawn a \$32 billion a year industry, said John Love of Pannell, Kerr, Forster, a San Francisco consulting firm to the lodging industry.

The motel is to the highway what the hotel was to the railroad.

"At first all hotels were built downtown near the railroad tracks," Love said.

"When you first got off the train in a town, hotel owners wanted you to see their hotel. They clustered

them around the tracks. But it had to be on the right side of the tracks.

"That's where the term the right (and the wrong) side of the tracks came from," he said.

In the historical sense, the railroad chugged around the bend almost for good, and the automobile rumbled onto the scene. That got Heineman thinking.

"The Motel Inn became the first one that wasn't built downtown," said Love.

Ted Maino of San Luis Obispo built the Motel Inn for \$80,000.

In the following years, motels underwent an identity crisis.

"It's really funny how the terms got screwed around," Love said.

At first, the term Mo-Tel meant to the motorist, a bed for the night. Little more.

Then motels began to offer more services, similar to hotels. Some started calling themselves motor hotels, he said.

Then the trend reversed itself. No services became the rage again. That spawned the term budget motel.

No matter what you call them, the Motel Inn was the first. The word motel first appeared in the dictionary in 1950, Grau said.

The honor has cost the Motel Inn a few ashtrays and towels, souvenirs to collectors. "It goes in spurts," said Grau who used to be a hostess at the inn before she bought it. "But that happens everywhere. It's just an honor to own it.

Motels: An Ex-Outcast Is Now Inn

By MILES CORWIN,
Times Staff Writer

SAN LUIS OBISPO—In the novel "Lolita," Vladimir Nabokov lampooned motels and considered them to be the epitome of American bad taste. "All those Sunset Motels, U-Beam Cottages, Hillcrest Courts. . . . We held in contempt the plain whitewashed clapboard Kabins, with their faint sewerish smell or some other gloomy self-conscious stench and nothing to boast of. . . ."

Playwright Sam Shepard often uses motels to convey images of American desolation and in the stage directions for "Fool for Love" describes in detail the generic gloomy motel: "Stark, low-rent motel room on the edge of the Mojave Desert. Faded green plaster walls. Dark brown linoleum floor. . . . Bed covered with faded blue terry cloth bedspread."

Vilified by FBI Chief

Even J. Edgar Hoover, the late head of the FBI, vilified motels for their contribution to the erosion of American morals. He authored an article in the old American Magazine in 1940 calling motels and motor courts "assignation camps" and "crime camps."

Although motels for decades have been the symbol of all that is not first class, but *declassé*, in travel, they now are being celebrated for their cultural and economic contributions to American society.

A number of books recently have been published on highway architecture and American auto travel that featured the motel's place in history.

The motel industry is now recognized as a success story almost unparalleled in American business history, said Randy Smith, president of Smith Travel Research, a marketing research firm. Since the 1920s, motel industry profits have doubled each decade, and the summer of 1986 was the most lucrative ever, Smith said.

Museum Exhibit

And the lowly motel has finally been deemed important enough to warrant an exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. Entitled "At Home On the Road: Autocamping, Motels, and the Rediscovery of America," the exhibit, which features a complete array of motel memorabilia, has been so popular it has been extended until January, 1987.

"Americans on the road are important because they reflect changes that are beginning to occur at home," said Roger White, who organized the Smithsonian exhibition. "Just as people began moving away from cities to the suburbs, when they took vacations they began staying in motels by the highway, instead of downtown hotels. This whole movement had a distinctly anti-urban flavor."

The Smithsonian exhibit opened in 1985 on the 60th anniversary of the world's first motel—the Motel Inn, San Luis Obispo's contribution to American travel history. The motel, which first charged \$2.50 a night, is still open and housing

Please see MOTELS, Page 16

Motel Inn 1987

Los Angeles Times

MOTELS: They Found Success Down the Road

Continued from Page 1

travelers in small stucco bungalows beside U.S. 101.

Originally it was supposed to be called the Milestone Motor Hotel. But workers could not fit the three words on the sign, said Betty Grau, the current owner. They began testing combinations and measuring space and finally, she said, came up with Milestone Mo-Tel. A few years later the name was changed to the Motel Inn, and the neon sign by the road alternately flashed an "M" and then an "H" so motorists as they drove by would first see "Motel Inn," and then "Hotel Inn."

The motel and a gas station next door were built just inches from the highway at the foot of the steep Cuesta grade on the outskirts of San Luis Obispo. So when cars broke down ascending the hill, motorists would be forced to stay at the motel overnight while their cars were being repaired, Grau said.

An early brochure explained the new lodging concept: "The Mo-Tel is neither a hotel nor a bungalow court, yet it combines features of both. You drive your car right off the highway and into your own garage."

In 1925 motels were a novelty, but today they have evolved into a symbol of the mundane homogeneity that is becoming increasingly common in America.

Motels evoke images of cups in plastic wrappers, ice buckets on Formica counters, Gideon Bibles in drawers, rumbling ice machines, and the faint smell of Lysol and carpet cleaner permeating the rooms.

Features Satirized

Nabokov in his 1955 novel "Lolita" satirized the uniformity of motels and the impersonal signs posted inside motel doors: "We wish you to feel at home here. All equipment was carefully checked upon your arrival. Your license number is on record here. Use hot water sparingly. . . . Thank you. The Management. P.S. We consider our guests the Finest People in the World."

Although they have reputations as bland highway landmarks, a number of motels were built during the 1930s and 1940s featuring outlandish architectural designs. During that time, motels were proliferating, competition was growing and proprietors sought outrageous images to attract travelers who were speeding by.

The Motel Inn was a forerunner of the dramatic highway image. As motorists drive by San Luis Obispo, they catch a quick glimpse of what

appears to be a miniature Spanish Mission, with white stucco walls, red tile roof and mission bell tower, complete with a powder blue dome and spire looming over U.S. 101. Designed by a well-known Pasadena architect, Arthur Heineman, one of the innovators of the bungalow court, the Motel Inn was at one time painted bright pink to ensure that even more potential customers took notice.

But even a pink mission was sedate compared to some of the motels that sprang up. John Margolies, author of "The End of the Road, Vanishing Highway Architecture in America," has traveled throughout the country and chronicled the rise and fall of the whimsically designed motel.

His favorites include a chain of Texas motels called the Alamo Plaza Courts with each office shaped like a miniature Alamo. The unusual design, Margolies said in a telephone interview, ensure that the visitor will "Remember the Alamo."

Idiosyncratic Design

Another memorable structure, Margolies said, was Slappy's Town of Ghent Motel in Jacksonville, Fla., which closed three years ago. The owner, known as Slappy, was a sailor who married a Belgian woman during World War II. When Slappy returned to Florida, he built a motel office—with a residence on the second story—in the shape of the town gates of Ghent, his wife's hometown, so she would not get homesick.

"With the advent of the interstate, motels all became codified," Margolies said. "It no longer mattered what buildings looked like because of the 800-number reservation system and television commercials."

Southern California used to be a mecca for outrageously designed motels, Margolies said. But the Wigwam Village Motel in Rialto is one of the few that remain. For the traveler driving down Foothill Boulevard in Rialto, the old U.S. Route 66, the Wigwam is an arresting sight: 19 enormous stucco teepees silhouetted against the San Bernardino Mountains in the distance; a 12-foot wooden Indian in front of the office; and a large orange and red neon marquee with the suggestion: "Do It In a Tee Pee."

The Wigwam was part of a chain of seven tepee motels built throughout the country in the late 1930s and only a few are still operating. When Route 66 was the gateway to the West and automobile travel was still considered high

Please see MOTELS, Page 17

MOTELS: They Finally Find Success

Continued from Page 16

adventure, the Rialto Wigwam represented the exotic and fantastic for those visiting California for the first time.

The tepees, which are next door to a used-car lot, are laid out in a semicircular pattern with an expanse of grass and several palm trees in the center, to resemble an Indian village. For verisimilitude, the tepees have diamond-shaped windows, orange stucco simulations of rolled-back tent flaps and faded zigzagged stripes circling the tepees at mid-height.

At one time the marquee at the Wigwam proclaimed: Sleep in a Wigwam—Get More for Your Wampum. The furniture was rough-hewn wood, the walls were stained plywood panels and rugs and bedspreads decorated with Indian patterns. But today the bedspreads are crushed velour, the plywood panels are covered with wallpaper and the tepees feature adult movies and mirrors over the bedposts.

"Now we get mostly couples because families don't think the tepees are that cute anymore," said manager David Fu. "But the couples like them because they give you more privacy than a typical motel room."

Motels like the Wigwam, where each unit is free-standing, are becoming increasingly rare because they use space inefficiently, Fu said. And the current owner is considering tearing down the motel and building a market on the property.

In today's motel business, corporate chain operations have replaced the visionary entrepreneurs and builders of eccentric highway lodges. The garish Madonna Inn, built in 1959 off U.S. 101 in San Luis Obispo, a glowing pink and white structure that looks like a ride at Disneyland, is a conspicuous exception.

California Leadership

Much of the innovative motel architecture was created in California and it has had an effect on American society, said David Gebhard, a professor of architectural history at UC Santa Barbara and co-author of "A Complete Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles."

"Motel architecture certainly introduced and made many things popular like the carport—the idea of not having an enclosed garage,"



BERNIE BOSTON / Los Angeles Times

Roger White, organizer of Smithsonian exhibit, beside photo.

he said. "Motels were really the major impetus in spreading that idea into the arena of domestic architecture. And motels popularized and helped make acceptable the whole idea of patios and the indoor-outdoor style of architecture."

No state has contributed more to the evolution of the motel than California, motel mavens say. The first motel was founded here and now there are more motel rooms in California than any other state. And the most famous motel ever filmed—the Bates Motel in the movie "Psycho"—was set near the fictional Southern California town of Fairvale.

The first motel evolved from a series of more primitive accommodations that were created after the invention of the automobile, said White of the Smithsonian. During World War I, touring cars were designed for camping and "auto-tents" were bolted to running boards, "auto-kitchenettes" were stored on fenders and seats could be pulled out to create berth-like beds.

Small-town businessmen, who at first denounced auto campers as undesirable drifters, soon began to view them as an untapped source of income and opened campgrounds at the edge of towns. The campgrounds evolved into spartan tourist cabins, then fully furnished cottages. In the 1950s chain operations entered the lodging business and motels throughout the country began to resemble one another. The Holiday Inn made predictability a selling point and at one time its slogan was: "The best surprise is no surprise."

While motels proliferated, many local communities were outraged by the patrons. A 1935 study on sex and motels conducted by the Southern Methodist University so-

ciology department determined that "the whole atmosphere is that of a rendezvous—of a trysting place. Secrecy, furtiveness—quick slipping in and swiftly stealing away. This tourist camp is no resting place for the weary, but is an abode of love—a bower of bliss in which amorous couples devote themselves to the worship of Venus."

To counter this reputation, Kemmons Wilson, who founded the Holiday Inn chain in 1952, made sure Gideon Bibles were in every room and maids were told to open them to new pages every day. Wilson also contacted clergymen so they would be on call at many of the motels in his chain.

Successful Enterprise

Motels now are so successful at attracting families that the lodging industry is a \$46-billion-a-year business. And many motels have moved into downtowns, evolved into multistoried motor inns and are competing with hotels for customers. The distinction between hotels and motels is becoming increasingly vague. The only official difference between the two, according to a spokesman for the American Hotel and Motel Assn., is that motels always provide parking spaces.

The parking spaces and easy access are reasons why motels have had such success, said Randy Smith of Smith Travel Research in Lancaster, Pa.

"Turn on a game show and people are given the choice of all kinds of things," Smith said. "But you can count on them taking the trip to Hawaii. Americans are essentially restless people who love to take trips. And motels cater to that, they reflect that typically American desire to just pile into the car and go."

Motel Inn T/T
10/22/88 p.22

Times Past



By Dan Krieger
Telegram-Tribune

During the 1920s, the automobile was the pulse beat of the times in America.

Chevrolet advertised that their vehicles were "... for everybody, everywhere." The affordable, enclosed, self-starting motorcar revolutionized American society.

Twenty years later, researchers preparing the pioneering sociological study of an American community called Middletown (Muncie, Ind.), noted that a mother of nine children from a middle class family said that they would "rather do without clothes than give up the car."

I don't believe that priorities have shifted much since the mid-20s. The automobile, albeit made in Osaka, Japan, rather than East Lansing, remains the most economically pampered member of most households.

The automobile brought a vast number of changes in the way Americans lived. It nearly killed off the big summer resort hotels, where families arrived by train and spent most of their vacation on or about the hotel grounds.

The automobile gave the American family unlimited options for travel — not just on summer vacation but on weekends as well. As a result, trunk manufacturers gave way to producers of suitcases. And roadside accommodations eventually called motels began to appear.

This weekend, the Native Sons of the Golden West plan to place a marker at the Motel Inn at the base of Cuesta Grade. The marker will commemorate what most social historians now agree is the first structure ever given the name "motel."

The story of the Mo-tel Inn in San Luis Obispo begins in December 1925. Charles Hamilton of the Hamilton Hotels chain hired Pasadena architects Arthur and Alfred Heinman to design a motor inn along the Old State Highway 2 — the Pacific Coast Highway, which became U.S. 101.

Arthur Heinman and his brother were among the first architects designing the characteristic bungalow courts in Pasadena and Hollywood, according to Occidental College's noted architectural historian Robert Winter, in "California Bungalow" (1980).

The bungalow courts tied an elegant street facade to tiny apartments surrounding a garden court, landscaped with colorful Southern California plantings. The Heinmans did much the same thing for the Motel Inn. They created an elaborate mission-style frontispiece with small "fireproof" bungalows and garages in the back.

The Hamilton Chain had carefully selected the site at the base of the Cuesta grade, along the 1915 highway, just halfway between the Los Angeles Basin and the San Francisco Bay area. The property which once belonged to Walter Murray, founder of the Tribune, was purchased from Neil

Mo-tel

SLO's Motel Inn may have been first

Cook.

The development was financed by Harry Eliot, a partner in Milestone Interstate Corporation a subsidiary of the Hamilton Chain. Eliot was to stay on as the managing partner of the San Luis Obispo facility.

According to Eliot family folklore, the original name of the inn was to have been the Milestone Motor Hotel but there was not enough room on the sign for all these words, so Motor Hotel was shortened to Mo-Tel.

The name was then registered with the Library of Congress by Arthur Heinman on Dec. 24, 1925. For years, a phonetic pronouncing guide, "Mo-Tel" hung at the driveway entrance. A new word had entered the language.

The Milestone Chain was never completed. The Milestone Mo-Tel didn't fully open until the autumn of 1926, and became simply the Motel Inn well before the stockmarket crash in October 1929.

The Milestone Mo-Tel that opened during the fall of 1926 had its office in the bell tower structure, just as today. An early tourist brochure noted that it housed connecting private suites capable of accommodating 160 motoring guests. Each unit came complete with showers (the great innovation of the 1920s, as displayed by William Randolph Heart's guest cottages at San Simeon), heat and telephone.

The brochure added that "The Mo-Tel is neither a hotel nor a bungalow court, yet it combines the best features of both. You drive your car right off the highway and into your own garage."

The structure was built by Theo, Maino Construction Company. Like our Carnegie Library-turned-County Museum, the Motel Inn is a building about which former Ambassador Ted Maino knows a great deal.

Incidentally, there are rival claimants to the origin of the word "motel." The Bakersfield Inn, similarly situated at a critical junction on another route between Los Angeles and San Francisco, began using the term "motel" about 1930.

And in a 1979 book titled "Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel," author Warren Belasco credits San Luis Obispoan Jim Vail with inventing the term and opening the Motel Inn.

Well, Vail was a very diversified man who did a lot of different things. But those are stories for other excursions into times past.

ess



David Middlecamp/Telegram-Tribune

In the foreground is the 66-year-old Motel Inn, which recently came under the wing of Bob Davis, owner of the neighboring Apple Tree Inn (in the background).

U.S.'s first motel to get a facelift

Motel Inn leased by neighboring firm with an option to buy

By Joe Tarica
Telegram-Tribune

The oldest motel around has come under new management.

The Motel Inn, a San Luis Obispo landmark for 66 years, acquired a new manager June 27.

Bob Davis, owner of the Apple Tree Inn and Restaurant, agreed to a lease with an option to buy — the first step to taking over the complete operation from Milt and Betty Grau, owners of 15 years.

Davis immediately closed the Motel Inn's restaurant, bar and banquet facilities because of insurance questions. The motel's rooms at the north end of Monterey Street remain open.

Rather than reopen as soon as insurance is obtained, Davis said he's planning major renovations to restore the inn to its original appearance.

He said his plans do not include the demolition of the Motel Inn, nor do they include changing the other buildings in the complex at this time.

"Our intentions are to do a significant restoration and redecoration of the (main) building," he said. "We're excited about the prospects, and we think it's going to be an interesting venture."

Although the property is adjacent to the Apple Farm, Davis said the Motel Inn will maintain its own identity. "It

has a good reputation, and we just intend to build on that."

Davis termed his lease as "the beginning of a new chapter for the business."

The Motel Inn was called the Milestone Motel when was built in 1925. It was designed by Arthur Heineman, who coined a name for this roadside establishment, calling it

Besides merging those additions into an overall look, he said he would restore much of the building's inner mechanics, including unseen things like wiring and plumbing.

Davis said he hopes the restoration will be finished by the end of the year, with the main building reopening in early 1992.

"We're excited about the possibil-

63-year-old Grau said. "It's the end of a certain era."

Grau said she was confident that Davis would follow through with his restoration plans.

"You have something here that nobody else has," she said. "You have the first motel in the world."

Last week's sudden closing surprised many regular patrons when they arrived to find last call at the bar coming nine hours early — the bar closed at 5 p.m. instead of 2 a.m.

"You have to close down sometime," said Davis. "It's very simple. We do not have the proper insurance to run that kind of operation. That's the long and short of it."

San Luis Obispo resident Jerry O'Malley, a 20-year patron who dined "faithfully" at the Motel Inn restaurant, was shocked when he arrived for dinner June 27, only to be met by closed doors.

"Everybody was crying the blues down there," he said.

Like Grau, O'Malley, too, hoped to see the Motel Inn emerge from its renovations improved but with the same old charm.

"I'd like to see it renovated, remodeled," he said. "Not too much remodeled, but a little bit."

For Grau, turning over the Motel Inn is the end of a long family legacy that began in 1952 with the Little Chef

Drive-in, located on Monterey Street where the Maya Restaurant is today.

"It's very hard," she said. "I miss the people."

Grau said she and her husband, who live on the Motel Inn property, will move somewhere locally within the next three to four months.

"San Luis has been very good to me, my family," she said. "I love it here."

'Our intentions are to do a significant restoration and redecoration of the building. We're excited about the prospects, and we think it's going to be an interesting venture.'

— Bob Davis, new manager of Motel Inn

a "mo-tel." The contraction was short for "motor hotel" — which was too big to fit on the sign. The name was later altered to Motel Inn.

The term appeared on his sign for 25 years before being accepted into dictionaries about 1950.

Since it opened, Davis said the facility has had at least six additions, some of which do not fit in with the building's original Spanish mission style.

ites," he said.

During the restoration, Davis said he would ask the public for help in providing pictures and historical material that can help in recreating the original inn.

The current owner, Betty Grau, said she and her husband decided on the agreement with Davis because they were ready to retire from the business.

"It was time, and we were getting at that age and we wanted to retire," the



The Atascadero City Council will meet on Tuesday, July 9, 1991, 7:00 p.m. in the City Administration Building, 6500 Palma Avenue, 4th floor. Citizens are invited to attend. A full agenda packet is available for review in the Atascadero City Clerk's Office and the Public Library, Atascadero branch. A summary of the items to be presented are as follows:

- * Adopting a deferral compensation program for temporary employees in lieu of mandatory social security.

Roadside Dreamin'

THE WORLD'S FIRST MOTEL OPENED A NEW CHAPTER IN CALIFORNIA CAR CULTURE

BY MATTHEW W. ROTH



Most Delightful and Complete
Motorist's Hotel in the World
Half Way Between San Francisco
and Los Angeles
Complete Hotel Service
in Fireproof Bungalows

COURTESY JIM HEIMANN COLLECTION



TODD MASINTER

The Milestone Mo-Tel in a promotional postcard from the 1930s (top); the remaining portion of the Motel Inn as it appears today (above).

Automobile touring opened up a vast new territory for travelers in the early 20th century. "Tin can tourists" could take their cars wherever a hint of a road existed, then pitch a tent or bundle up under a blanket in the backseat whenever they needed to stop for the evening. Automobile campgrounds opened on major tourist routes, particularly in the West.

In the early 1920s, several entrepreneurs experimented with different styles of roadside accommodations that would combine a campground's convenience with a hotel's respectability and comforts. They coined the word "motel," which combined "motor" and "hotel." The first building in the world to do business as a motel was the Milestone Mo-Tel in San Luis Obispo. It was built in 1925 by Arthur S. Heineman, an architect and developer from Glendale.

The word *motel* has become commonplace, but when Heineman put up a billboard in San Luis Obispo to announce the imminent construction, people deluged him with reports of an apparent error. They said his sign painter had put an "M" in place of the "H." He had the sign repainted as "Mo-Tel" to signal the word's compound character.

Heineman envisioned the Milestone Mo-Tels as a chain stretching from San Diego to Seattle. He chose San Luis Obispo for the first location because it was the midpoint in the

two-day automobile journey between Los Angeles and San Francisco. His original plan called for each Milestone Mo-Tel to have a mix of both free-standing bungalow units and attached apartments, with parking outside each door and private garages for some apartments. The biggest departure from the auto camps was that every unit had its own indoor bathroom with a shower. He planned the locations at the outskirts of major towns to help travelers avoid urban traffic and noise. Each Milestone Mo-Tel would include laundry facilities, a restaurant, and a grocery store.

In promoting the chain, Heineman characterized it as an updated version of the California missions, a string of way stations for the modern traveler. His architecture reflected this agenda: The San Luis Obispo building featured a three-stage bell tower modeled after Mission Santa Barbara.

Heineman incorporated his firm as the Milestone Interstate Corporation and raised money from investors to complete the chain of Mo-Tels. But competition was fierce, and Heineman's attempt to register the name as a trademark did not prevent others from adopting it. The Milestone Mo-Tel was his vision for roadside accommodations, but less extravagant alternatives became far more numerous.

A boarded-up portion of the Milestone Mo-Tel (most recently known as the Motel Inn) stands today, tucked beside the Monterey Avenue exit of Route 101. ☉



TODD MASINTER



MILESTONE MO-TEL/MOTEL INN, 2223 MONTEREY STREET. The Milestone Mo-Tel—later known as the Motel Inn—opened its doors in 1925. Billed as the world's first motel, it served as one of San Luis Obispo's best steakhouses and most popular watering holes. The brick and stucco Mediterranean building with multiple gables and red-tiled roofs offered motorists a place to rest, relax, do laundry, and buy groceries. The main building supported a dome-shaped tower with a copper roof. Guests stayed in separate bungalows facing a central courtyard. Each room had an indoor bathroom—a luxury at the time—a telephone, and garage. Some units had kitchenettes. An orange tree grew outside each bungalow's door and guests were encouraged to pick the fruit. The now-boarded-up motel is slated for restoration to its original style.

Source: Janet Penn Franks, *San Luis Obispo: A History in Architecture* (2004)