

Field Guide to Coronado History:

1904 Scandal Rocks Coronado

By Bruce Linder



Well, maybe not a real scandal, but certainly one that commanded a degree of buzz amongst the socially elite of Coronado. Slip back in time with us to read this voluble but saucy article printed in the San Diego *Union* a hundred-and-ten years ago:

“The Countess Arabella Loughnan, the white-haired and rosy cheeked old lady, who claims an alliance with the English nobility, is finding a rough road for aristocracy to travel in Southern California. The countess had departed from Pasadena and is presently inhaling the sea breezes at Coronado, but her life there is proving to be troublesome.

“Her idiosyncrasies have proven a little more than the management of a cottage in Bachelor’s Row, a block from the hotel, can bear with, and to sympathizing friends the countess has sent word that she has been informed that her presence is unwelcome.

“Before departing from Pasadena this mysterious, but charming and handsome old lady was invited, much to her astonishment, to leave the Hotel Maryland. She found apartments at the fashionable boarding house of Mrs. Maj. Brown, “The Philadelphia,” on North Fair Oaks avenue. There she proceeded to impress the other guests with her rank and insisted upon the precedence due the rank of a countess on all occasions. She thereby soon became a source of discomfort to the remainder of the household.

“The result convinced Miss Loughnan that it was time she was moving, and she went to Coronado. Today she notified some of her friends and acquaintances that she had been absolutely offended by the manager of her Coronado cottage.

“The mystery surrounding this handsome old lady is one that has kept many people guessing ever since she first made her appearance in Southern California, several months ago. She is well supplied with funds, has a charming personality, but seems to be erratic on questions of lineage and nobility.

“It is said that she frankly admits that she purchased her title of countess, but claims that she was really entitled to it. Where she came from or who she really is, if she is not the Countess Arabella Loughnan, is a mystery that has kept many society women in Coronado wondering all winter.”

P.S. And immediately following this racy article was an advertisement that also caught a twinkling of a now-vanished era – “When buying souvenirs for your friends you should not fail to see the nice Ostrich Plums, Tips, and Boas at the Coronado Ostrich Farm.” © CHA

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