



An American Tour: 83



San Luis Obispo's *Motel Inn*

Created in 1925 by Arthur Heineman, the Motel Inn of San Luis Obispo (originally known as the Milestone Mo-Tel) is the first motel in the world.

The emergence and popularization of the automobile in the United States of the early 20th century inspired many car owners beyond commuting into town. The poor roads of the era combined with the vehicle speeds and reliability required two or more days of nearly all day driving for 400-mile trips such as Los Angeles to San Francisco. Trips requiring an overnight stay often left travelers looking for places to pitch tent or to sleep in their automobile if arrangements hadn't been made ahead to destinations and stopovers that also happen to have hotels or inns. The lack of niche accommodations to fill the need for automobile travelers who only needed an overnight stay to continue their trip inspired many entrepreneurs. The combination of the convenience of a campground with the comforts and respectability of a hotel or inn spurred the creation of the motel. Arthur S. Heineman picked San Luis Obispo for the first Milestone Mo-Tel as a midpoint location between Los Angeles and San Francisco which took two days of driving on the roads at the time.

The motel closed in 1991 and is now owned and being used by the Apple Farm (located next door) as an administrative building. The motel is located at the end of Monterey Street next to the on ramp to U.S. Route 101 in California. Many of the buildings were torn down in 2006, only two fragments of the original buildings exist including the mission style bell tower. [<http://en.wikipedia.org>]

