

Virtual Tour of The Santa Barbara County Courthouse

*A One-of-a-Kind
Masterpiece*





The Courthouse was designated a Santa Barbara City Landmark in 1981, a California State Historic Landmark in 2003 and National Historic Landmark in 2005.



*Santa
Barbara
Courthouse in
1855*

In 1855 the county purchased an adobe mercantile store from John Kays and converted it into the first county courthouse at this location.

Santa Barbara Courthouse in 1873 – 1925

Santa Barbara built a new county courthouse in the Greek Revival style, of which the cornerstone remains.

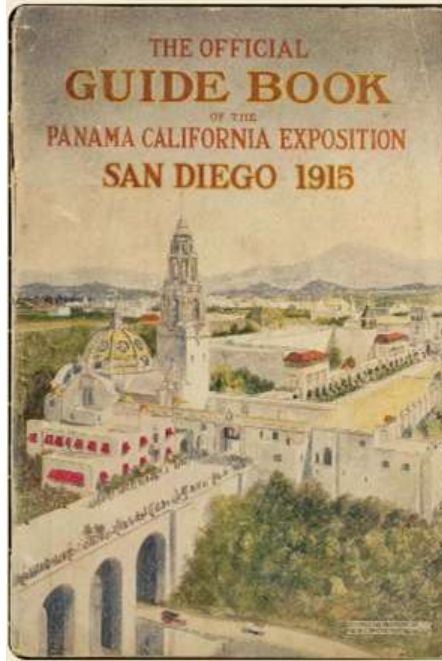
Later, a Romanesque Hall of Records was built. The style was popular in other US cities



1915-1925

San Diego's International exposition inspired a Spanish Revival movement across California.

Local advocates designed and built public buildings and homes in the new style, with white stucco, red tile roofs, arches, stonework, wood beams, wrought iron, and brightly painted accent tiles



Panama-California Exposition
1915 Guide Book



J W Collinge

El Paseo ca.1925
Courtesy S.B. Vintage Photo





June 29, 1925

*County officials met shortly after the earthquake to draft goals for a new **Spanish-Andalusian** Courthouse. New building codes strengthened efforts to use more Spanish renaissance architecture in rebuilding Santa Barbara.*

ELEVATION - ON ANACAPA STREET -
 PROPOSED COURTHOUSE - FOR SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

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A black and white photograph showing the steel skeleton of a large, multi-story building under construction. The structure is composed of numerous vertical and horizontal steel beams. Several tall palm trees are scattered around the building, some in the foreground and others behind it. In the foreground, three vintage cars from the early 20th century are parked on a paved surface. The car on the left is a smaller, open-top model. The two cars on the right are larger, dark-colored convertibles with spoked wheels. The overall scene suggests a tropical or semi-tropical location during the early 1900s.

Dedication Ceremony took place during Fiesta in 1929 and quickly became a hallmark of the city's new look.

Santa Barbara Courthouse Today

*Santa Barbara's
Courthouse is an
architectural treasure
and a vibrant center of
community pride: a
functioning Courthouse,
a National Historic
Landmark, and a place
for many celebrations.*



The Belly of the Whale and Relief Map

The ground floor Anacapa Galley is described as the "belly of the whale" with its bold arches forming the ribs of the whale

Built in 1934 for the National Forest Service by Civilian Conservation Corps. Installed in 1936. Scale 1 inch = 1 mile.



Grand Staircase

The decorative tiles on the wainscot, and throughout the building, were hand made in Tunisia, North Africa (the only materials not from California)

The lantern was inspired by the kind of lanterns aboard old Spanish galleons that were traditionally donated to churches following a successful voyage

"The Spanish Horseman" by Alan Gilbert Cram was commissioned by Santa Barbaran Max Fleischman to honor philanthropist Dwight Murphy

The ceiling, painted by Giovanni Battista Smeraldi, is a fine example of mudejar (moo-DAY-har) art. It was inspired by a 14th Century synagogue in Toledo, Spain



The Incredible Tiles

Stunning handmade tiles created with North African clay fired in kilns with slow burning olive wood

The tile pictures of women on the stairway are typical of Spanish art, in contrast to the geometric designs more common in Moorish art.



The Rose Window

The Romanesque Rose Window resembles those found in many European Christian churches.

Exquisite Bird and tree patterns surrounds the ceiling.

The Tree of Life adorns the wall of the staircase.





The Mural Room

The Jewel in the Crown of the Courthouse

Dan Sayre Groesbeck and two assistants took four months to complete the mural. It covers 4,200 square feet and he was paid \$9,000 for his work.

Depicts events in the history of Santa Barbara County

The ceilings were painted by Giovanni Battista Smeraldi. He was from Palermo, Sicily. As a young apprentice artist, he worked on several chapels in the Vatican.

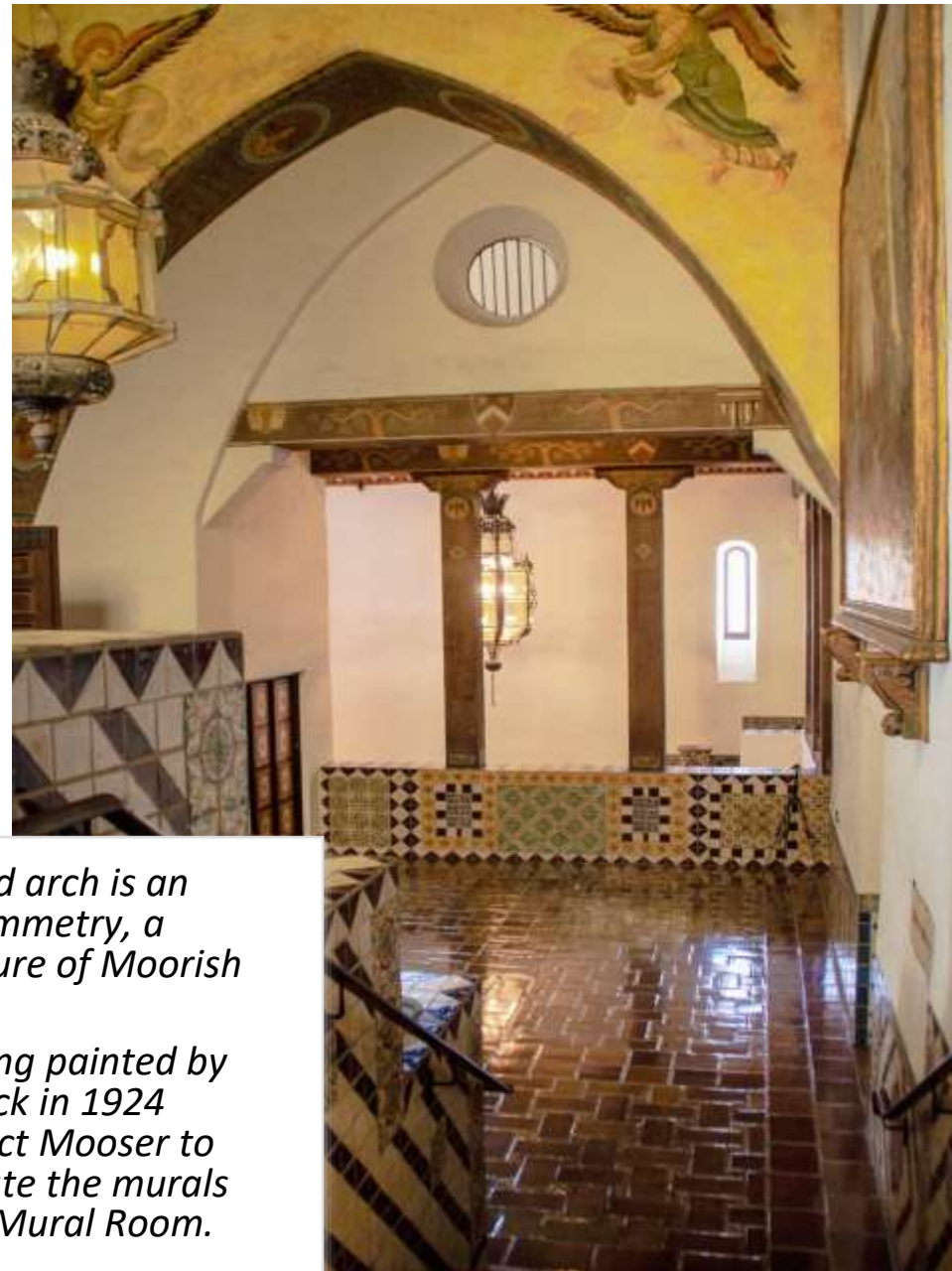




Second Floor Lobby

The off-centered arch is an example of asymmetry, a prominent feature of Moorish architecture.

Cabrillo's Landing painted by Daniel Groesbeck in 1924 inspired architect Mooser to hire him to create the murals that adorn the Mural Room.







The Loggia & Former Jail

the loggia is an indoor/outdoor walkway often seen in castles.

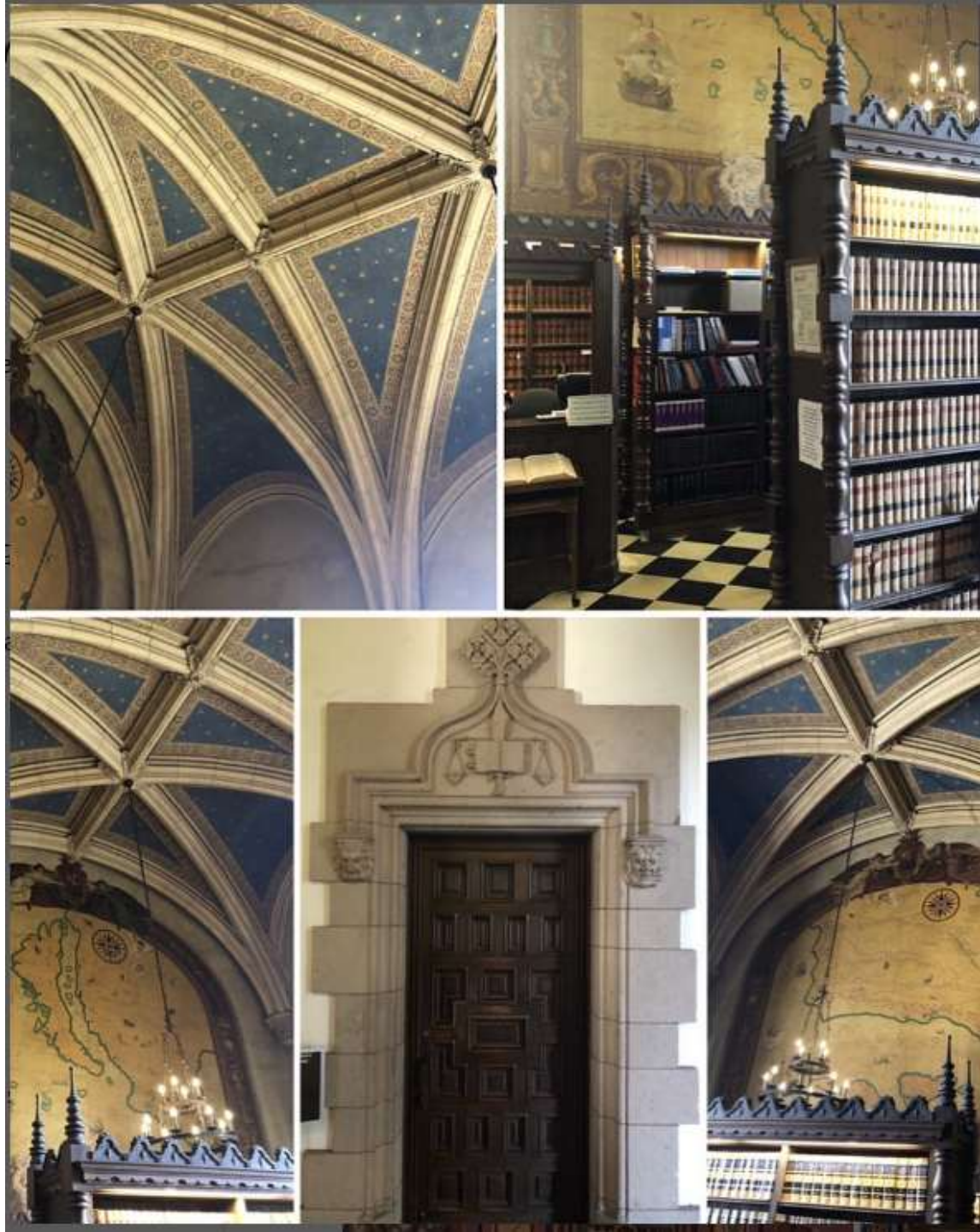
The original jail capacity was 140 inmates, men and women. The cells are like those at Alcatraz, which was built around the same time. In use until 1971.



The Law Library

The law library is a Gothic treasure box and features ribbed double-vaulted ceiling reminiscent of great libraries and monasteries, and high carved walnut bookshelves.

Containing 30,000 books, this is the only English Gothic style room in the building.







The Rotunda

At the bottom of the circular staircase is a bronze medallion placed by the Native Sons of the Golden West. It portrays a brown bear encircled by the dedication date of August 14, 1929.



The Spirit of the Ocean Fountain

This beloved sculpture was originally carved in 1927 by Ettore Cadorin.

After decades of exposure to the elements, The Courthouse Legacy Foundation raised funds to carve a replica of the sculpture. The skilled stone carvers also worked on projects at Westminster Abbey, Salisbury Cathedral and the Princess Diana Memorial.



The Great Arch

The arch designed by Ettore Cadorin is inspired by Roman triumphal arches. The sculptures on the arch were also carved by Cadorin. At the upper left is Justitia, the Roman goddess of law and justice. At the right is Ceres the Roman goddess of agriculture.

The Clock Gallery & The Viewing Deck

The Bisno Schall Clock Gallery features a functioning Seth Thomas Tower Clock energized by gravity, controlled by a swinging pendulum, regulated by a double 3-legged gravity escapement and driving two hands on each of four large outside dials.

From the Observation Deck take in breathtaking panoramic 360° views of Santa Barbara.



Free Docent-Led Tours

Monday through Friday at 10:30 AM and 2:00 PM

On the weekends, there is only a 2:00 PM tour

No reservation required

Group Tours

Private tours are available for groups of eight or more.

Clock Gallery Visits

Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays from 10:45AM to 12:00PM. The Clock can also be observed through a glass enclosure on the floor below the Observation Deck





*Photos and content courtesy of the
Santa Barbara Docent Council*

Thank you!