

# COSMOPOLITAN CHRONICLE

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini and Cosmopolitan Hotel.  
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## Agustín Vicente Zamorano Renaissance Man of San Diego

Guire John Cleary  
Historian  
California State Parks  
San Diego Coast District

A small tragedy took place in San Diego in 1842. A man came off a ship in our harbor; an exile returning home to die. He was Agustín Vicente Zamorano, one of the most brilliant men to have served in the governance of Mexican California.

Zamorano had come to San Diego in 1825 as the secretary of Governor José María Echeandía. Zamorano married María Luisa Argüello at Mission San Diego on February 15, 1827. Padre Vicente Olivas, the last Franciscan missionary to serve at San Diego, acted as officiant and Governor Echeandía and Alférez Romauldo Pacheco acted as witnesses. The marriage record is still preserved at Mission San

Diego. Juan Bandini also married an Argüello and thus became Zamorano's brother-in-law.

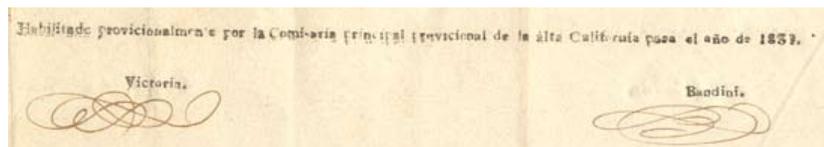
Zamorano's accomplishments in Alta California certainly earn him the description of a Renaissance Man. His calligraphy was the finest in California and was used as a model by teachers. His greatest accomplishment was the importation of California's first printing press and the creation of California's first books, including a children's arithmetic book in 1835. Quite possibly the first hand press was utilized by him on Presidio Hill in San Diego in 1825. His other accomplishments include painting, architecture, poetry and even needle point designs!

Zamorano was appointed the last commandant of the Presidio of San Diego, but did not assume command. He took up exile in Mexico after the triumph of Alvarado in 1838. He spent four years in Mexico and was appointed Adjutant Inspector of Alta California in the government of the newly appointed Manuel Micheltoarena. Zamorano became ill on the ship taking him to San Diego and arrived more dead than alive in 1842. Antonio María Osio wrote



*A self-portrait of Zamorano.*

that he came ashore only to die in the arms of his family. Osio also recalled that Zamorano was robbed on the ship by his own companions and that Zamorano's gold watch and chain "mysteriously appeared on one of the most respected Señores Jefes." Historian George Harding believed it was probable that Zamorano died at the home of his brother-in-law, Juan Bandini in San Diego. Later interviews with his family stated that he died on September 16, 1842. His family recollected that he was such a patriotic Mexican that it was appropriate for him to die on Fiestas Patrias. The exact location of his grave is unknown, but quite possibly he was buried at the Presidio. He is claimed as an ancestor by the martial arts master Michael Matsuda and musician-performers Thom Davis and Linda Ronstadt and also includes our friends at the California Indian Market. Perhaps his spirit still roams the hallways of the Casa de Bandini.



*The first dated printing (1831) in California, signed by Juan Bandini and Manuel Victoria, and printed by Zamorano.*

