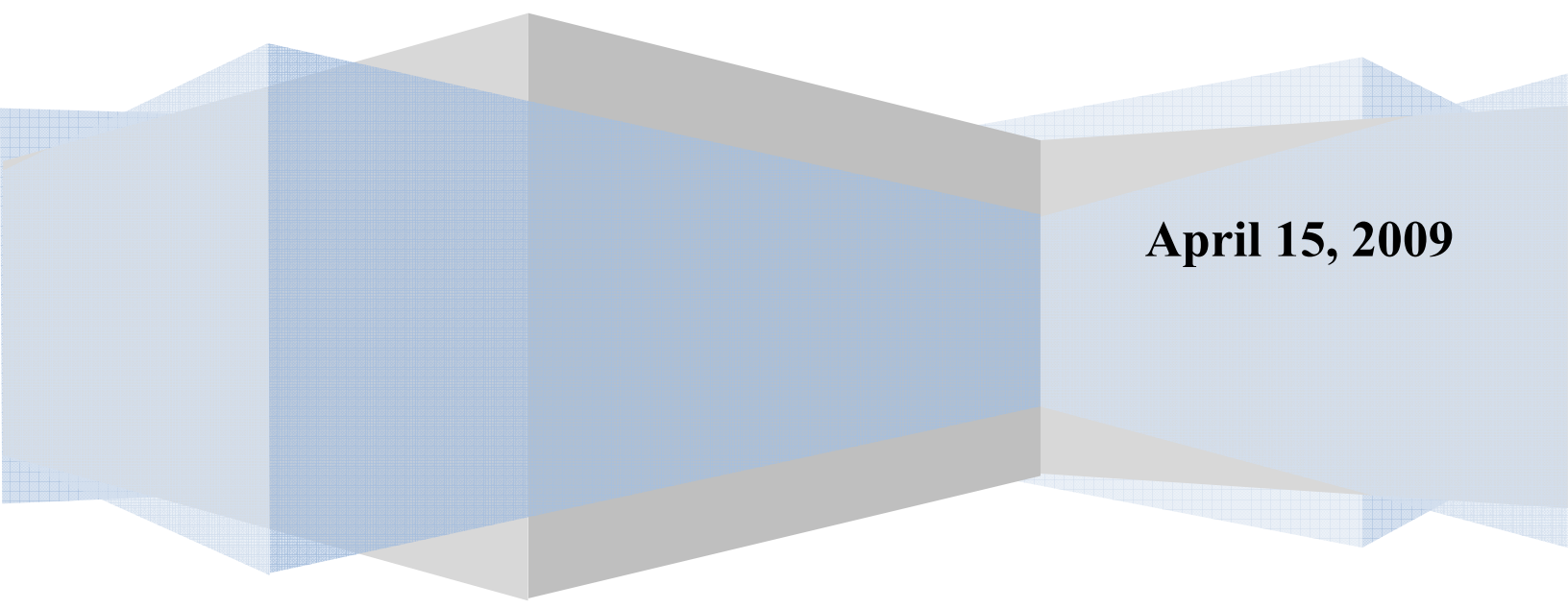


The Beautiful Stranger Research Summary

**Research via historic records and mediumship by:
John Streiff and Bonnie Vent**



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Introduction

Beginning in February 2006 medium and Spirit Advocate Bonnie Vent and researcher John Streiff began an inquiry into the history of the Legend of the Beautiful Stranger of the Hotel Del Coronado in Coronado, California.

Their approach took advantage of Bonnie Vent's abilities to communicate with those who have passed and to discover their true stories. Many historical figures have done so in the past, often seeking Bonnie's assistance to sort out undone business resulting from an untimely or early passing.

John Streiff had been studying mediums and mediumship for four decades, and was interested in finding another case to test "historical mediumship." This methodology examines the historical validity and specificity of anecdotal statements made by mediums to see if this information can be used to understand otherwise unknown or confusing histories. The technique has been successfully applied in previous research projects, including with the United States National Parks Service in the early 1980s.

There are many variants of the Legend of the Beautiful Stranger of the Hotel Del Coronado. Most presume that she was a young woman who checked into the Hotel on November 24, 1892 and was found deceased on the ocean side of the Hotel November 29, 1892, an apparent suicide. Most people came to believe, and still believe, that her true name was Kate Farmer Morgan originally of Riverton, Iowa.

Many questions surround this story, despite a full Coroner's Inquest having been held November 30, 1892 during which testimony was given by several witnesses. The official cause of death was determined to be a suicide.

Stories and rumors of unexplained activity have persisted for decades at the Hotel Del Coronado. People claim to have seen a "woman in black" who many believe to be the ghost of Kate Morgan, still haunting the Hotel for some reason. Some believe she is sorry she took her life, while others wonder if perhaps she still awaits her traveling companion from whom she became separated prior to arriving at the Hotel. Whatever the reason, this ghost, and perhaps others, have been seen and experienced in so many ways that the Hotel Del Coronado is considered one of the "most haunted" hotels in America today.

Bonnie and John wondered why it is that this legend has persisted and, more to the point, why has the young woman apparently remained at the Hotel Del Coronado? As there were open questions and an apparent mystery to solve, it was decided to see if historical mediumship could provide any answers.

The results are nothing short of astounding. Not only does the Legend appear to be incorrect, this error may in fact be the reason the young woman remains at the Hotel Del Coronado. In the pages that follow, you'll learn about the Legend and read the story that Bonnie and John developed after over two years of solid documentary historical research, guided by information from none other than the Beautiful Stranger.

This unusual research partner made it possible to find new avenues of investigation and uncover new facts that have never been known before. These new facts and the many subject matter experts interviewed during the research, makes this perhaps the most comprehensive study of the Legend of the Beautiful Stranger to date.

Join us now as we go on a search not only for the true Beautiful Stranger of the Hotel Del Coronado but as well, in a real way, on a journey of self-understanding and an exploration of the human spirit.

Timeline

To understand what follows, here is a brief timeline of the events surrounding the death of the young woman.

November 24, 1892

"Mrs. Lottie A. Bernard" checked into the Hotel Del Coronado. According to the Hotel Chief Clerk, she had a single valise and was apparently traveling alone. She was assigned Room 302 in the east wing of the Hotel. The desk clerk on duty recorded her name in the Hotel Register for her. The next person to check in was Joseph A. Jones.

November 25, 1892

The young woman asked the Chief Clerk for assistance as she wanted to retrieve her luggage but did not have the claim checks. The Clerk informed her that she could go to the train station and claim her luggage by identifying the trunks and their contents.

November 26, 1892

The young woman appeared in the Hotel Drug Store looking for some pain medication. She told a Realtor, who had his office in the Drug Store, and the Pharmacist that she intended to go to San Diego to claim her luggage the following Monday and that she needed something for pain from neuralgia.

November 28, 1892

In the early morning, the young woman asked her bellman to draw a bath and said she would remain in the bath for about two hours. About thirty minutes after getting into the bath she rang for the bellman to dry her hair which had gotten wet, she said, when she slipped in the bath. Afterward, she asked for a wine and whiskey cocktail to be brought up to her room. When the Chief Clerk was told what had transpired, he returned to Room 302 with the bellman to interview the young woman who by now was covered up in bed.

The Clerk asked her if she had yet gotten to San Diego, she replied she had not. He wondered if she wanted a fire, she did not. He asked if she wanted to see the Hotel doctor since she clearly did not feel well. She told him she had "stomach cancer" and had been seen by the best doctors who had given up on her. She also said that her brother, a doctor from Minneapolis, had been traveling with her but that she had lost track of him. Nevertheless, she said, she expected him to come and get her any day. When the Clerk asked who else could be contacted to secure funds for her stay, she gave the name "G. L. Allen" of Hamburg, Iowa. The Clerk sent a telegram to Mr. Allen in Hamburg that afternoon, requesting his assistance in funding the young woman's stay at the Hotel Del Coronado.

In the evening the young woman stopped by the Office to see if any messages had arrived. The Chief Clerk was on duty that night and told her none had come for her. She wandered off toward the Dining Room and was heard to sigh "Oh, no one comes for me anymore" as she walked off.

November 29, 1892

An electrician turning off the exterior lamps surrounding the Hotel came upon the body of the young woman at the top of some steps leading down to the beach on the ocean side of the Hotel. He and a nearby gardener observed the body. The two men noticed a gun near the young woman's outstretched hand. They notified the Chief Clerk who was opening the office at the time. He instructed the body be covered and called the Coroner. The Coroner arrived at 2 PM that afternoon and removed the body. Deputy Coroner Stetson searched the room and found a hat, a bottle of quinine pills, a sponge, a letter and an envelope, a valise containing a key and \$16, and a nightgown hanging in the closet. These were apparently all the possessions the young woman had.

November 30, 1892

The San Diego County Coroner held an Inquest into the death of Lottie Anderson Bernard. The empanelled Coroner's Jury heard several witnesses all testify that they thought they had seen the young woman at various times in the past week. Some said they saw her in San Diego on November 28, intent on buying a gun that day. However this testimony is contradictory and another woman may have in fact been seen.

December 2, 1892

The San Diego Coroner became concerned that about the identity of Mrs. Lottie A. Bernard since no next of kin had come forward. The brother had not yet appeared either in Coronado or San Diego. The Coroner had a sketch drawn of the young woman's face and circulated that sketch to numerous papers on the West coast and in Detroit, Michigan where she said she had come from.

December 5, 1892

A family from Detroit notified the San Diego Coroner that a member of their family, Miss Lizzie Wyllie, might be the Beautiful Stranger. In time it developed that this young woman was alive in Toronto, Canada and in any case did not perfectly physically match the unfortunate woman deceased in San Diego. Lizzie had pierced ears and the deceased person found at the Hotel did not.

December 10, 1892

A family from Los Angeles, California notified the Los Angeles Police that their housekeeper might be the Beautiful Stranger. Circumstantial evidence found in Los Angeles identified this woman as Mrs. Kate Morgan of Riverton, Iowa. While not everything made perfect sense, enough factors seemed to be in accord that this identity was accepted by most people.

December 13, 1892

The young woman was buried in an unmarked grave at San Diego's Mount Hope Cemetery. Local ladies sent flowers. A service was held at Johnson & Company funeral home in San Diego. That same day, the San Diego Union reported, the trunks were removed by the "responsible parties", who were never identified.

The young woman became known as "The Beautiful Stranger" as a result of a newspaper article written in December 1892. The name has stuck, and she is known by that name to this day. Her actual identity, at least for some, remains a mystery.

Trips to the Hotel Del Coronado

Bonnie and John went to the Hotel Del Coronado for the first time in late February 2006. On this trip, Bonnie was presented initially with images of a carriage drawing up to the Hotel and a young woman in a multi-colored dress emerging.

Later, inside the Hotel, a young woman spoke through Bonnie. The young woman said her name was Lottie, not Kate Morgan. She said she was tired of hearing the name "Kate Morgan" and of hearing people tell her story as if it were Kate's. She commented on people who seemed more concerned with other things than with her. She told us that she remains at the Hotel Del Coronado because no one realizes her true identity and her story is being told incorrectly. Lottie gave us many tidbits on the first visit. On subsequent visits she told us more and added more details.

On the second visit, in August 2006, she elaborated on her death. She was quite clear that she was not a suicide. She initially believed that she was a victim of an accidental homicide. She said that she saw the man who shot at her on the ocean side of the Hotel about midnight the evening of November 28. She described this man in some detail; it was no one known to her, she told us. When we questioned her more about this, and specifically asked her who he was really shooting at, a strange thing happened. She seemed perplexed for a moment; then, through Bonnie, she said clearly to John "I think I see what you're getting at." Lottie really doesn't know for sure how she died, and she had begun to question her own memory of the events.

The third visit occurred in November 2006 on the 114th anniversary of the death of the Beautiful Stranger. We stayed for two nights in the room she had occupied in 1892, which is Room 3327 in the modern hotel. While some activity occurred the first night, the following day, on November 28, 2006, the young woman spoke through Bonnie for about an hour. This was an extraordinarily long time for a trance to continue. She told her story again, this time on camera. She answered many questions and even made a confession. She told us, for the first time, that she had been lying about the existence of her brother, the medical doctor. He was, she said, a complete fabrication created for the benefit of the Hotel, who was pressuring her, she thought, to pay up or move out.

She also revealed that she did have a traveling companion, but that he was her fiancé, not her brother. Later she would have more to say about him and why they had come to the Hotel. At this point, she only reaffirmed what she had said before, that they were there for "a celebration."

Over a year passed before Bonnie and John returned to the Hotel Del Coronado. During the interval John spent a great deal of time researching details of the story using clues given by the young woman. He interviewed over twenty subject matter experts in over a dozen different disciplines from forensics to history and from medicine to railroads to theater arts. None of those interviewed had ever been asked anything about the Hotel Del Coronado or the Legend of the Beautiful Stranger. Most were amazed their area of expertise had anything whatsoever to do with such a fantastic story.

In July 2008 Bonnie and John again returned to the Hotel. Bonnie had not had contact with Lottie in awhile, and wondered if perhaps simply talking about the true story had satisfied her. Neither Bonnie nor John were prepared for what happened the evening of July 8, 2008. That evening they made their way to the Hotel and met a couple, ironically enough, from Detroit who were staying in Room 3327, Lottie's former room. The couple had already experienced a number of things that day, typical of guests staying in and around that room in the Hotel. They had heard strange noises near their bed, water had appeared out of nowhere and drenched the husband, their bath robes had been moved from the bathroom to the closet and hung together on a single hanger when several were available, and the hangers themselves had rattled in the closet for no apparent reason. The activity continued while Bonnie and John were sitting on a nearby interior veranda trying to make contact with Lottie.

Lottie did not appear that night, but other people did. One claimed to have been a laundress at the Hotel in the 1890s. She said she witnessed the events of the night of November 28, 1892 and saw a young woman murdered. She told her story in images. It was clear that she was showing Bonnie the Hotel as it was in 1892, quite different from the way the Hotel is today. She showed Bonnie details that don't exist in the modern hotel

and of which Bonnie had no knowledge. This was a new witness to the events; a witness unknown prior to 2008.

Lottie In Summary

These are some of the salient facts we learned from the communications with Lottie and the subsequent historical research that was done. While much of the story parallels the Legend, it also diverges in significant respects. It is important to remember that all of this is initially taken from Lottie's story, told in her own words.

My name is Lottie Bernard, not Kate Morgan or anyone else

Lottie was most emphatic about this point. She reiterated it over and over. However to accept this we had to be sure that the circumstantial evidence for Kate Morgan having been at the Hotel Del Coronado could be dismissed. This turned out to take some time. Ultimately the case for Kate Morgan, while convincing on the surface, was found to have significant problems that simply could not be ignored.

The real Lottie may have been located in history. She appears to have been born in Canada, came to the United States with her family in the 1860s and lived in the Northern states until she married shortly after 1880. She lost her husband fairly soon thereafter and moved to Detroit, Michigan by 1890. She resided there until 1892 when she came west to the Hotel Del Coronado in November of that year.

I arrived at the Hotel in the company of a travel companion

To date, there is no historical support of this statement. No testimony given at the Coroner's Inquest and no newspaper article mentions a travel partner. A bellman was quoted as saying that Joseph Jones noticed a well dressed man with a young woman on the train coming to San Diego. They were thought to have parted company in Orange, California prior to the arrival in San Diego. According to the bellman's account, Joseph Jones got on the train in Denver and traveled with the couple. Joseph Jones is registered right after Lottie Bernard on the Hotel register. The bellman goes on to say that Joseph Jones recognized the woman at the Hotel.

Lottie said her travel companion did not desert her in Orange, but in fact accompanied her all the way to the Hotel. She said that they had an altercation in the hall outside the room and it was there that he turned and left, never to be seen again. Even to this day, in death, Lottie has no idea what happened to him. Perhaps he had something to do with her demise, although she continues to disbelieve this.

Some have alleged that Joseph Jones was an alias for some other person. However, careful research uncovered Jones' true identity. He was an export agent by trade working for Albert Cheney & Company of New York City in 1892. He entered the U.S. In October, 1892 and made his way by railroad to San Diego having visited his parents for a short while in his native Boston. He visited an old business acquaintance in Alpine, California before departing for his home in Western India at that time. He was also a U.S. Consular officer.

I never went to San Diego, I remained at the Hotel

Lottie told us that she did not go into San Diego. Once she came to the Hotel Del Coronado she remained there. She gives the impression that she spent most of her time in her room, only going out occasionally to take brief walks. It was likely on these walks that she was spotted by the various people who saw her and interacted with her during her few days' stay. She was in fact in her room when the Chief Clerk spoke to her around noon. The bellman stated that she remained in her room most of the day. If she had gone to San Diego she certainly would have retrieved her luggage.

I was ill while I was at the Hotel

Lottie confirmed that she was ill at the Hotel but vehemently denied that she was pregnant, as has been alleged. This story began with a newspaper interview given by a local San Diego doctor, B. F. Mertzmann, The doctor

believed that the woman's sallow complexion and her complaints of stomach pains pointed not to "stomach cancer" as she had claimed, but instead to pregnancy. Mertzmann seems to have never considered that she might have had neuralgia as she told most people, nor that she might have either overdosed on quinine or had a bad reaction to the medication leading to her unusual complexion.

My room was cleaned out after I died

Lottie said on several occasions that her room was the scene of a flurry of activity after she died. While this is not surprising by itself, what is surprising is her assertion that "things were removed, and some things were left behind."

The Hotel Chief Clerk did say under oath that he noticed several letters and envelopes on a table in her room the morning of November 28 while he was talking to her. Apart from seeing her name on one of the envelopes, he was unable to see any other details as he could not get close enough "without being imprudent..".

Her bellman, Harry West, also testified that she had asked for matches that night; she had said to burn some papers. Deputy Coroner Stetson testified that he had found what appeared to be the remains of papers burned in the room's fire grate. And only one envelope and a single letter were found the afternoon of November 29.

Lottie also said she had more with her than was found. Earlier in her stay she had offered the bellman a handsome tip. He said he told her he didn't want to take money from a sick woman but she protested telling him, "Take it, I've got plenty." Was she unaware of exactly how much money she had? Or did she think twenty dollars or so was a large amount? Or did she in fact have more and was some removed, leaving only a token amount behind to conceal the robbery?

Recall that the woman who was seen in the coach was wearing a multi-colored dress, but everyone said at the time that the young woman wore only a single black dress. Is this an interpretative error, or is it a clue?

These are some examples of the kinds of information provided us by the Beautiful Stranger.

Perhaps the most significant finding was her name. It turns out she is in fact, NOT Lottie Bernard!

Her real name is revealed next.

Lottie's True Identity

What? Lottie Bernard is NOT her real name? This is precisely what was discovered. Read on to find out how this was done and see the trail of evidence for yourself.

Significance of G. L. Allen

The only person the young woman at the Hotel Del Coronado ever mentioned was Mr. G. L. Allen of Hamburg, Iowa. So he must have known something about her. She told the Hotel Chief Clerk to wire Mr. Allen for money. And Mr. Allen did offer to pay for the young woman's stay at the Hotel. So he seems to have known of her.

The telegrams are important, and they still exist. In his response to the Hotel, Allen says he does not know the woman but that he did go to school with her husband. It is for this reason, he continues, that he helped her with funds and authorized the Hotel to draw on his Iowa bank account.

George L. Allen was raised and went to school in Sangamon County, Illinois about 100 miles west of Springfield. The area is best known as the birthplace of President Abraham Lincoln, who was assassinated when young George Allen was in grade school in Illinois. Young people who lived near each other went to the same schools. No one with the family name "Bernard" lived in this area between 1860 and 1870 when George Allen was in school. But there was a "Barnard" family not far distant and one of those boys was likely the actual husband that Allen referred to in his telegram to the Hotel Del Coronado in November 1892.

Lottie's early Life

As best as can be determined from information provided by Lottie herself and by historical records, the real Lottie was born Charlotte A. Anderson in Canada in 1863. She moved with her family to eastern Minnesota by 1870. The family moved to Wisconsin by 1880. Shortly thereafter she likely married one of the Barnard boys and the couple likely settled in Michigan. Within a few years' time, her husband had passed on, she said from cholera, and she was left a widow.

She is found living as Mrs. Charlotte Barnard on High Street in Detroit, in 1890 through 1892. She does not appear in Detroit after that time. This is very likely the young woman who checked into the Hotel in 1892.

Why Lottie came to the Hotel Del Coronado

No one has been able to explain why Lottie came to the Hotel Del Coronado. Lottie has given us the answer. She has told us that she came west with her fiancé to show some of her dress designs to investors that were interested in marketing one of the first high-end ready-to-wear lines in San Francisco. In fact, in 1908 there is such a store in San Diego according to an advertisement in the Coronado Tent City News. Likely this represents the end of the first wave of this new trend which could have started up in San Francisco over a decade earlier.

Lottie and her Luggage

During the trip west Lottie tells us she had a few altercations with her traveling companion. Apparently the last of these occurred in Orange, California. She told us he got on another car for the remainder of the trip south to San Diego and rejoined her on the platform at San Diego. She said that somewhere en route to the Hotel Del Coronado they realized they had forgotten their luggage. They decided to proceed to the Hotel, Lottie told us, where she checked in. Her companion escorted her to her room and was to return to get their bags. Instead, an argument broke out, he left and never returned.

Someone did in fact pick up the bags at the train station the day Lottie was buried. Up until that time, the bags had remained unopened, since no one could, for some reason, get authorization to open the bags. The only person who could have claimed the bags at that point would have been the traveling companion.

Case Against Others

Other women have been identified as the Beautiful Stranger. These identifications are now believed incorrect.

Lizzie Wyllie

Lizzie Wyllie thought originally to have been from Detroit, Michigan, was the first person identified as the Beautiful Stranger. But, after doing much deeper historical research than anyone before, we discovered that Lizzie Wyllie was in fact Canadian, not American as earlier believed. She was alive, well and married in Canada in 1898 to Alexander McDougall, six years after the events in Coronado.

Kate Morgan

Showing that Kate Morgan never came to the Hotel Del Coronado proved a bit more tricky; the evidence for her presence there is circumstantial, but compelling. In brief it is this:

- Kate Morgan was working in Los Angeles until November 23. She left that morning never to return
- She was wearing a black dress and carried a single valise
- The San Diego Police Chief identified her from a picture of Kate Morgan found in Los Angeles
- She grew up in Fremont County, Iowa and would likely have known George L. Allen
- George L. Allen and his brother Albert were step-relations to her husband Thomas E. Morgan
- Kate Morgan came west in 1890 with Albert Allen while still married to Thomas E. Morgan

While this seems conclusive, there are other facts contradictory to the Beautiful Stranger being Kate Morgan:

- Kate Morgan had rheumatism, the Beautiful Stranger complained of neuralgia, they are different
- The Beautiful Stranger had a personal letter with her that Kate Morgan could never have acquired
- Hotel workers that interacted with the Beautiful Stranger doubted she had a common background
- The Beautiful Stranger had a Canadian penny pocket piece; Kate Morgan was raised in Iowa
- Her trunks had fancy French locks, it is unclear how Kate Morgan would have acquired such trunks
- The young woman was seen elsewhere when Kate Morgan was known to have been in Los Angeles

And for every point that seems to indicate Kate Morgan was at the Hotel, there is a compelling counterargument:

- Kate Morgan could have gone elsewhere and the timing could have been a coincidence
- Many young women wore black dresses and carried valises while traveling
- The Police Chief may have been motivated to make the identification as the Hotel was losing money
- Allen was aware Kate had left his friend Thomas Morgan causing Morgan some embarrassment
- It is unlikely George Allen would have assisted her given she deserted her husband
- Some have suggested that Thomas Morgan was in Coronado. In fact he moved to Nebraska in 1890 and remained there the rest of his life. He was delivering the mail in Nebraska in November 1892.

What became of Kate Morgan if she didn't die at the Hotel Del Coronado. The answer may have been provided to Bonnie Vent in 2008 when she was presented some imagery. These images showed a young woman with dark hair being struck by a horse-drawn fire carriage on a city street corner near a building with a white painted wall. The young woman was placed near the back of the building and the valise she was carrying was removed by a passerby. Thus, she would have had no identification when she was found. It is unclear where these events occurred. They might have occurred on November 28, 1892. This outcome would explain why papers were left behind that should have been of value to Kate Morgan. It is possible this was an attempt to tell us of Kate Morgan's demise.

Summary

The Legend of the Beautiful Stranger of the Hotel Del Coronado began in the last days of 1892. It persists to this day and has been told in varying ways. One of the main differences among the variants of the legend is the name of the key character. Most people believe she was in reality Kate Farmer Morgan of Riverton, Iowa. But recent extensive documentary research motivated by information provided from the actual Beautiful Stranger herself suggests otherwise. In the course of learning that her true name is Lottie Barnard, other facts were uncovered and more was learned about other people.

Her true motive for coming to the Hotel Del Coronado may have been uncovered. Her connection to the social elite is strongly suggested. She was clearly troubled and in trouble, but not in the ways that have been described by others. She was and remains a tragic figure in many ways.

This is an example of the use of historical mediumship. Information is provided by the deceased that is then carefully fact-checked against recorded history. Many times new information emerges that forces historians to reconsider their current histories; this has happened before. Other times, the information provides new clues and insights to dead ends historians have been living with, thinking they have no recourse. All the information is treated exactly as are hunches and intuitions that historians frequently act on. Historians are always free to ignore information that seems out-of-place or inconsistent with known trusted history.

Time may or may not reveal any further truths about the Legend of the Beautiful Stranger. We believe we have, in this telling, compiled the most complete and compelling version of the story to date. We continue to vet this story and endeavor to perfect it even now.